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Das Fremde sehen: der europäische Blick auf Japan in der künstlerischen Dokumentarfotografie

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Aus:

BETTINA LOCKEMANN

Das Fremde sehen

Der europäische Blick auf Japan
in der künstlerischen Dokumentarfotografie

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Das Fremde: Klischees und Stereotype beeinflussen seine Wahrnehmung. Auch dem europäischen Japanbild liegen viele Klischees zu Grunde. Wie kommt es dazu? Das Buch verfolgt die historische Entwicklung dieser Vorstellungen vom faszinierenden Fremden und setzt sie in Beziehung zur (als authentisch geltenden) Dokumentarfotografie. Beispielhaft wird gezeigt, wie zeitgenössische Projekte künstlerischer Dokumentarfotografen diese Bildklischees auszuhebeln versuchen, um so ein neues, kulturell fremdes Japan zu zeigen.

Bettina Lockemann (Dr. phil.) ist Künstlerin und Kunstwissenschaftlerin. Sie lehrt künstlerische Fotografie und Kunsttheorie u.a. in Stuttgart und Zürich.

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ANHANG

Leitfaden für die Gespräche mit japanischen Fotografie-Experten

Bei den Fragen handelt es sich um Anhaltspunkte, die je nach Gesprächspartner und -verlauf weiter präzisiert und konkretisiert wurden.

General Questions:

1. Have you ever noticed photographic works dealing with Japan conceived by Westerners?
2. If yes, why did you notice them? (Were they particularly stereotypical or did they present a certain angle that you had not noticed before?)
3. If no, do you think that the view from the outside is generally different from the Japanese view on Japan?
4. If yes, what do you think is the reason?
5. Do you think it is interesting to have people from the outside present a view of your home country?

Specific questions about the books:

6. What is your first impression after browsing through the books? Do you think they are very typical/untypical representations of Japan? Why?

Thematic focus:

7. Can you specify the subjects touched in the works?
8. Do you think the thematic approach to be interesting/new or seen before?

Graham:

9. How do you find Japanese people depicted ?
10. Japanese imagery (Manga-character; atomic bomb victim)?
11. Japanese motors of racing cars?

Neudörfl:

12. How do you find Japanese people depicted?
13. The city?
14. Recreational activities?

Final:

15. Do you think it would be interesting for Japanese viewers to see these works exhibited in Japan?

*Aya Tomoka**Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Aya Tomoka

Das Gespräch mit Aya Tomoka, Galeristin der *Third Gallery Aya* hat in Osaka am 31. Mai 2006 stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Bettina Lockemann: As you are a curator showing photography exhibitions, have you ever been interested in showing a foreigner's view on Japan in your curatorial practice?

Aya Tomoka: I represent a Korean artist [Youngsook Park] who made a work entitled »Mad Women«. At first she photographed Korean contemporary women. Her topic is the condition of Korean women. Most contemporary Korean women naturally live in Korea. Their rights are very limited, more than in other countries like Japan or other developed countries. She photographed friends and they presented their feelings and conditions like performers or players and she took many photographs of Korean women for a few years. After that she was interested in other women, especially in the Eastern-Western area and she asked her Japanese friends to help her find a gallery or an art space. I heard about her work and I got very interested in her work. Maybe two years ago I had her exhibition and at that time she stayed in Japan for two weeks to take photographs of Japanese women. Maybe this is sort of a foreigner's view on Japan, but she is concentrated on women. So maybe this is rather different and it's only one case, too.

B.L.: Maybe we just start looking at the books. As you know this book already [Graham] I would like to know your first impression and what you think of how it represents Japan.

A.T.: I'm very interested in this photo book because foreigners see us differently. Most Japanese do not like his attitude because it is so critical towards Japanese culture, especially contemporary Japanese culture. But even if a Japanese photographer took pictures like Graham, maybe on a similar topic, the foreigner's view still seems more clear than that of Japanese photographers. [...]

B.L.: When you say this is a rather critical view of Japan, I was wondering if this is something a Japanese photographer could not show of Japan? Is this a special view from the outside?

A.T.: Maybe here we recognize how Japanese look like. But in the busy daily life we don't care about these things especially we do not notice how Japanese look.

We live on an island and only most recently the number of foreigners is increasing. Most of the other developed countries have many foreigners, their number in Japan is much smaller than in other economically equivalent countries.

B.L.: Do you think it is interesting to see an outside view on Japan?

A.T.: As gallery owner I am very interested in this outside view, but most Japanese people are not interested, I think.

B.L.: I would like to ask you some questions on the imagery in the book. I am particularly interested in your opinion on the way the women are depicted in this work.

A.T.: When I saw this book for the first time, I felt that the view on young Japanese women is very critical...

B.L.: Is it?

A.T.: Yes, I think so and I find it very interesting. The photographer combines various snapshots. Here you have this picture (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. Toy Animal Procession, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 226), next come the women – maybe in a night club – and next is a picture of an engine of a car. How did the artist think about the editing of these pictures? It is very curious. Maybe the editing is the focus of his work. It creates a lot of meaning. Some of it I can understand easily, but some of it I have trouble understanding. I would like to ask him about it. So some pictures are so close-up like this (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man #1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 239). And I thought it difficult to understand knowing this book only and none of his other works. [...]

B.L.: Do you think this is a very typical or untypical representation of Japan?

A.T.: I think his pictures show a typical view but his edition of his pictures is very unique. I'm so interested in his editing. Recently the camera is so simple and easy to use. Many people like to photograph and the number of photographers is very large. Especially in the 1990s the number of women photographers has increased and especially the snapshot-style has become very popular in Japan. Some of them choose the snapshot-style to express themselves and their feelings. I saw a lot of interesting snapshots recently, but most of the photographers took their pictures unconsciously. But Graham chose the same snapshot style, but his theme is so clear and his editing is so unique.

B.L.: So you think the editing makes it special?

A.T.: Yes, I think so. To edit the close-ups, and the view of daily life, and the pictures of young Japanese women together, most photographers would not do that. But he is thinking so deeply. Maybe Japanese culture has become so complex and complicated recently and many aspects are included here. And if he would like to express the complicated Japanese culture, his editing is very suitable to do so. But we would like not to understand. I see a lot of photography books every year, but I remember this one, because it is so interesting. But as Japanese I felt also, that this is very complicated.

B.L.: You think it's hard to understand?

A.T.: I don't think so, I am able to understand it. But he expresses aspects Japanese don't want to know of.

B.L.: Do you mean the Japanese don't want to know about the history, the questions of the war, and the tenno and so on...

A.T.: Yes! Each year in the season of the end of the Pacific War we must think of it [mid August]. But after the season ends we forget about it. But some Japanese express the same things...

B.L.: Japanese photographers?

A.T.: Photographers, and artists, and film-makers. It's very difficult to explain. [...]

B.L.: Maybe we can start talking about the other book then. You probably don't know this one, I suppose.

A.T.: Ah, all black and white photographs. [...]

I have not heard of her name before. How long did she stay in Japan?

B.L.: For four months and then she came back a year later for a short time.

A.T.: For last six or seven years so many curators came to my gallery to research for their exhibitions, maybe from 20 countries. And some of them said to me that they were interested in Japanese culture, which has a future aspect to it. At first I could not understand, but some of them told me the same things and why they think about it. And the artists of my gallery joined some exhibitions. And some of them published some catalogues including the text of the exhibition. The curators wrote the similar things just like future world.

B.L.: In Europe we have this image, that Japan is ahead of us in time. They have newer and better technology and the buildings look as if they come out of a science fiction movie, like Minato Mirai and other newly developed areas. These are things that Europeans conceive as futuristic. That is why we always think that Japan is kind of the future. The things that are contemporary in Japan today, will be contemporary in Europe in the future.

A.T.: Comic-strips and animations are so popular in Europe and especially Japanese animation is so popular. Some of them express the future world.

Maybe our Japanese culture is not futuristic. But especially the technical machines are so good and cheaper than in Europe. Most of our culture is not like that, though. Maybe the culture in Japan and Europe is so different and the image from animation in TV gives the Europeans that futuristic image of Japan.

B.L.: What is your impression of the book seeing it for the first time?

A.T. I think this book, as it is made of all black and white photographs, is very different to Paul Graham's. Color photographs have a much stronger expression, and compared to Graham her editing style is not so unique. But I feel so strange. Each photograph of this book is so ordinary but why do I feel strange? Those are very good snapshots. I think this book is very interesting but the title of this book is not suitable.

B.L.: I think she used the title to play with the idea we have in Europe about the futuristic Japan and then not showing it in the pictures and to have more an everyday kind of approach.

A.T.: Most of the pictures are so natural for me, I feel like saying, I know, I know... I think the snapshot-style is not popular in Europe, I heard. Is it true?

B.L.: I would think so, this kind of street photography is so subtle that many people don't know what to make of these pictures, because they are not beautiful and they don't show interesting things. You have to look at the images and explore them and then you will see things. I think a lot of people like to notice a picture and say, yes, I understand and then they go on to the next. And they don't like to look around or think for themselves, why did she take this picture.

A.T.: Especially in my work as a gallery owner I must introduce an artist and sell their work. And artwork is so complicated. But if I would like to sell them it is a better way to choose strong and beautiful objects. Maybe snapshot-style is a different way. Many amateur photographers like the style of snapshots. But professional photographers don't choose it too often, I think. But a few internationally famous photographers chose their snapshot style, like Daido Moriyama and Nobuyoshi Araki, but recently the situation has changed. The view from the foreigners it's an interesting topic for Japanese and these two books are both snapshot style and so interesting.

B.L.: Do you think Neudörfl's book shows, that it is made by a foreigner? Does it show a particularly foreign view or do you think it is so everyday like, that a Japanese photographer could have taken them as well?

A.T.: It is difficult to say it clearly. Maybe the title is the difference. Maybe our daily life is combined with a lot of strange things that have to be explained and it's a better way to express it like this photographing in snapshot style. I thought they saw that. The edition is so important to express the photographers' topic. And I think their edition is different from Japanese. Maybe,

if Japanese photographers edit their pictures, they distinguish the object like landscape and portrait and don't mix them together. They would divide city landscape and country landscape by chapter. But she has edited them all together, it is similar to Paul Graham's way.

We Japanese understand a situation like this picture (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 9; Lockemann 2008: 276). Do you understand, too?

B.L.: I found it kind of striking, because there is so much space but still the girls are standing together so closely. And then, of course, this is probably by chance, but they are standing in the point where the lines meet.

A.T.: That's right.

B.L.: And then there is something going on outside the picture because she is looking in that direction. I felt this is a way like Japanese girls would behave, as German girls in the same age would probably not stand together as closely, they would be more scattered in the space. So I did think this was an image particularly on Japanese behavior.

A.T.: Yes, I think so. And we know why they stand there. And this picture (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 10) is so different from this (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 9; Lockemann 2008: 276) and this (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 6; Lockemann 2008: 256) and Japanese photographers could not edit them together. But it is a very interesting point to know her work. The close-up portraits are a quite different way to express the person. Maybe she wanted to express other things than I thought.

B.L.: Other things like what?

A.T.: Maybe the gesture of the Japanese. [...] Maybe she is interested in the aspect of cultural existence, I think.

B.L.: You mean, because they don't look straight in the camera?

A.T.: When I saw this picture (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 30; Lockemann 2008: 79ff.) I could not understand what kind of person he is. It is so strange.

B.L.: I think so too, but I was telling Ms. Matsumoto before that in Europe Japanese people are supposed to all look alike. And many European photographers take pictures of Japanese who all look alike, so this is one of the major stereotypes we have of Japanese or Asian people in general, that you can't tell them apart, which, I think, is kind of stupid. But this was one of the first photographic works I saw where first I see the person and only on second view I see this is an Asian person. So this is why I thought these portraits here are very particular and very special. Still I don't think I know anything about this person or I can tell anything about this person or about his character, his way of thinking or what he does for a profession or whatever. But I still think this may be a way to say: how are we supposed to understand a person that is living in a very different culture. And I think it is interesting, that you, too, say you can't tell anything about the character of this person.

A.T.: Yes. It's so interesting. (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 29; Lockemann 2008: 268) I cannot understand this picture. Why are they wearing these caps?

B.L.: I think this is a disaster prevention center and they practice how to behave in case of an earthquake. You can see here that the lamp is shaking.

A.T.: In a regular house there are not as many people... I am interested in the cultural aspect of each country but I have never paid attention how Japanese look. I feel uncomfortable.

B.L.: Why?

A.T.: We Japanese always pay attention to each other how we look like but I never saw how foreigners feel about Japanese. Maybe I'm not used to think about it. Maybe at first I feel uncomfortable and strange.

B.L.: Do you think these pictures show aspects of Japanese society that you don't see yourself living here?

A.T.: Her expression is so delicate and if I looked at her book carefully I could understand it. But it is so difficult to know it. I deal with photography for 10 years and I like photographs and expression photography. I always look at many photographs. And I know about the way of expression by photographers. But it's difficult for a general audience to understand her expression, because it is so delicate. Compared to that Graham's expression is so strong. Maybe most people would understand his theme, I think. [...]

I think it is difficult for foreigners to express aspects of other cultures because most of them are so exotic. I think, many years ago the role of photographers was going abroad to take pictures and show the other world. But now it has changed. I think there are a lot of topics in the environment of the artist. At first, especially in the beginning of my gallery, I wanted to deal with photographers who expressed their daily themes in Japan because I can understand it well. But recently I have to visit other countries to do my business and I find, I really understand things especially when the artists express the reason. And recently I deal with artists who express various topics like that. I agree to your opinion that these two artists express aspects of Japanese culture. And I think it's very interesting.

B.L.: Do you think it would be interesting to show those works in Japan?

A.T.: Yes, but I think it is so difficult to sell them. So it's a big problem. But I think it's very important to show these works, I think. I like her pictures. Maybe her delicate expression is suitable to Japanese feelings. And she took many pictures, I think.

B.L.: Thank you very much for sparing your time and giving your opinions.

*Enari Tsuneo**Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Enari Tsuneo

Das Gespräch mit Prof. Tsuneo Enari, Professor für Fotografie an der Kyushu Sangyo University, Fukuoka, hat am 23. Mai 2006 in Fukuoka stattgefunden.

Weil Prof. Enari seine Meinungen und Ideen besser auf Japanisch ausdrücken kann, wurde das Gespräch von Aaron Browne übersetzt, der seit langem in Japan lebt und als Student an der KSU im Fachbereich Keramik an einem kombinierten Master/PhD-Programm teilnimmt. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich an der Übersetzung und versucht, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden. Im Raum anwesend waren außer Prof. Enari und dem Übersetzer: Prof. Momose (Fachbereich Fotografie, KSU), Natsuko Tajima, Kuratorin des Universitätsmuseums, der Leiter des Fachbereichs Kunst [Name unbekannt] und Inoue Hiroshi, Mitarbeiter des Foreign Office der KSU.

Enari Tsuneo: I started my career as a photographer at a paper called *Mainichi Shinbun*, which is a very large newspaper company. I was a photojournalist there and worked there for 12 years and then became independent as a photographer. Most of my work is documentary and I am interested in how Japan has dealt with the responsibility in the war, especially in the situation today. I would like to ask you as a German, how you feel about World War II and about the way your country deals with its responsibility. And I want to talk about how Japan has dealt with it. I think that Japan, unlike Germany, has not really dealt with the issue of war, it hasn't come to terms with the war. I have dedicated my career to show that. Because Japan hasn't taken responsibility, it is causing problems in Japan even today, especially in the Japanese relations to other countries. And finally I want to know the purpose of your interview today.

There are two different ways of documentary. There is a public view and there is also a private view, a personal view, and I take the personal view. How a single person deals with things. Also, Prof. Momose is one of the leaders of a younger movement of photography and he is also a documentary photographer, so if you have any questions about the new generation of photography in Japan, feel free to ask.

Bettina Lockemann: Well, thank you first of all that you could spare some time to talk to me. Maybe I can first introduce my thesis. In my thesis I am dealing with documentary art photography, not journalism or other kinds of

documentary photography. I have been investigating the European view on Japan, because I think a lot of photographs taken by European photographers in Japan show a very stereotyped view of Japan. And two projects I have come across, I think show a different view of dealing with Japan, which goes beyond stereotyping. But I as a European can only have a European view on these books, so I can say it is beyond stereotyping but I would like to know how Japanese feel and think about it, to have a reverse view what they see in these pictures. I think the topic of the Japanese history will come up with Paul Graham's book as he is dealing with questions of how in European eyes the Japanese have failed to cope with their past, whereas in Europe, or in Germany especially, there have been some ways of getting around the past and of taking responsibility for what happened.

E.T.: So you are interested in the difference of opinion, the European way of looking at it and the Japanese way of looking at it?

B.L.: I think it is kind of hard to differentiate the stereotypes, to say, oh, the Japanese see it this way and the Europeans that way because the stereotypes intermingle in a way, but I would like to know what the Japanese think of these projects and if they think that these really are going beyond the stereotype or not.

E.T.: May I look at the books? So this is Paul Graham and where is he from?

B.L.: England. And the photographs are from 1989 to 1995, this may be important to know. And maybe, while you are browsing through, I would like to ask my first question: Have you ever noticed European works depicting Japan that were kind of particular in any way?

E.T.: How old is Paul Graham?

B.L.: He was born in 1956.

E.T.: So he is 50 now. I have seen several works of foreigners in relation to Japan. The way they see Japan is very unique, very different. And just by looking at a few pages of this book I can tell, that this person has a very good eye for seeing Japan.

B.L.: As you said that the view by foreigners is very different in depicting Japan, do think it is interesting for Japanese to see how foreigners depict Japan?

E.T.: Some people have a very sharp eye and show what Japan really is, and some people just show a very stereotypical view. It depends on that person, what that person knows about Japan, what they are feeling at the moment as they are taking the photographs. This is very cynical. You have a picture of a woman with makeup on, then you have an engine and then you have pictures of Hiroshima. The pictures are dealing with the economic boom, with the economic success, like you see the engine, but as you see the pictures of the bomb it is also dealing with different aspects of Japan.

You have pictures of the late 80s, early 90s, it is a good document about that time, in the middle of the bubble period. When you see the picture of the cats, of the calendar on the wall and you see the previous picture of Hiroshima and you can see how Japan has really changed in 50 years coming from everything being completely destroyed and now you have pictures of cats on the wall in a very much at home kind of style.

What is this about?

B.L.: This is called surrender photograph, it's from August 15th 1945.

E.T.: Graham has a really focused eye on modern Japan, or Japan at that time. The pictures I have seen of other European or American photographers have been like Mount Fuji or geisha and I think this person is seeing the real Japan, the modern Japan after the war. And I think it is critical of Japan, it is not just showing nice images of landscapes. It is showing things like the fake culture... I am not sure why Graham took the pictures of the women but every few pages you see a picture of an engine and to me the photographer is trying to say: »Is this ok, is this really, what you want? Your society just to be somewhat fake or only concerned about material things and success?« This refers to the calendar and the car and things like that as supposed to something else. This is what I think any time I see an engine that the photographer is trying to make a statement.

After I looked at all the pictures I would like to tell you how I feel.

Graham has a very sharp perspective on Japan after World War II.

Do you know what that is?

B.L.: I think this is something from the Hiroshima Museum, some backdrop blown up really large.

E.T.: What is that?

B.L.: It's keloid scar tissue that they put in some jars to preserve and show in the Hiroshima Museum.

E.T.: What is that?

B.L.: It is the rising sun in concrete.

E.T.: In May 1945 the Germans surrendered. And on August 15th 1945 the Japanese surrendered. Italy, Germany, and Japan formed a triad. After the war they all have become democratic and they have become if you may not say booming, but a strong economy. They are all on the same platform, they have joined the United Nations, they fund the UN military etc. And I want to go through the book from the perspective of Japan after the war.

Berlin was completely destroyed and Tokyo was as well totally destroyed after the war. And after the war General McArthur came to Japan and brought everything with him like democracy, he gave us the constitution and they started to rebuild the infrastructure and also he brought food, Western food. And then there was the court held in Tokyo to deal with those responsible for the war. And in Germany there were the Nürnberg trials, but there was a big difference between the Nürnberg trials and those held in Tokyo.

The trials in Germany were very democratic, the Nazis had their own lawyers and so on. In Japan, almost everything was decided by McArthur: who was guilty, and who was not guilty. The worst thing that happened in Germany after the war was that the wall was built. The Korean war in 1950 helped Japan economically, because America after the war heavily invested in Japan to rebuild the Japanese economy but this happened because Japan was a military base for America. And they used Japan as a jumping point to fight the Korean war and that brought a lot of money into Japan which also helped the economy.

As America has so many resources, after the war they brought the idea to Japan of having lots of things: a big family, many cars, a lot of TVs: material things. And that was very different to the Japanese idea of Japan before the war. They brought these kinds of ideas to Japan and that was the beginning of the modern Japanese person, the basis for its psyche.

Japan and Germany after the war, became high level of engineering, in Germany you have Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes Benz, Porsche, in Japan it's Toyota and all the other companies, In Japan and Germany they have similar values, Japanese people work very hard, and I don't know how it is now, but 30, 40 years ago, Germans worked very hard as well.

At least eight million Japanese people died in World War II and they caused maybe five or six times the amount of them, they killed like 50 or 60 million people over a period of 15 years. World War II started for the Japanese in the 1930s. But the government of Japan, after the war, specifically the department of education, they don't require to teach anything about the war. And Japan, from the government to local industries, has been trying to focus only on the new things. Like: ›let's create a new and rich society‹ and they try to ignore the past.

Just like Japan, Germany has high engineering skills and Mercedes Benz is one of the leaders of industries that have recovered after the war. Unlike Japan, who only concentrated on recovering economically from the war, even though Germany was also recovering, each individual citizen realized or was taught to realize what they did was wrong and they feel responsible for the war unlike Japan. In Japan, instead of each individual or citizen dealing with those problems personally, they rely on the government. The government has to apologize. It's not our problem, it's the government's problem. Whereas in Germany the Germans themselves have their own individual feelings. Or they feel bad and know, that they did terrible things.

The basis for this book is the war or it is Japan after the war, that is the topic. And this is showing the modern age of Japan, the motors, the modern things like the calendar. When I see this book I understand this is how Japan really is. It is nice to see that from a fresh perspective. It's dealing with a much more serious topic than the normal scenes foreigners would take of Japan like Mount Fuji and Geisha and Kabuki and things like that. And I think this is very critical of the Japanese government. Now you can ask your questions.

B.L.: Well, basically they have been answered. I think its very interesting what you said about this book, as I felt very equally, because I thought it is a very new perspective on contemporary Japan and it differs a lot from other photographs I have seen from Europeans having been to Japan. And this is why I picked out this book because it was very interesting and different.

E.T.: I am going to talk about the artistic value of the book. In Japan there is no photographer right now that has this kind of point of view like looking at a very broad perspective on the same topic. There are many different ways a photograph can be taken. It can be artistic or it can be just to take the moment in time [...]

The way the artist is showing, going from one page showing a woman to the next page showing an engine, is really unique, there are no artists in Japan who would do that, that's why this is very interesting. I really like the way he has arranged the pictures, but it would be impossible for me to have that kind of image in mind or to come up with that idea. In Japan – have you heard of something like ›wabi-sabi‹? – it's a very delicate idea what art is, like beauty? It would take a very long time to explain. But you have seen Japanese art and you have heard of the tea ceremony and the utensils, like the tea bowl they use. From the Western perspective it wouldn't be a beautiful bowl but from the Japanese point of view, you know, even though it might have bumps and part of it has glaze and another part has no glaze, we see a kind of beauty in that. So it would be difficult for a Japanese to come up with the idea of just taking an engine like a form of art. The way of arrangement of the pictures in the book is very shocking and has a strong impact. The first pictures you see, a woman dressed up nicely, then the engine and then one goes to the third page and there is a picture of Hiroshima and I am thinking that the artist is saying to the Japanese: look what you have forgotten, look what happened a long time ago. I think that Japanese have not repented, they haven't felt bad about what happened in the war. They either don't know about it or they do know about it, but haven't thought about it or they don't care. So it would be difficult for a Japanese person. They wouldn't think about doing a documentary on the war, it would be very difficult to publish it. And even if you publish it, nobody would look at it.

Just looking at the introduction I can get the general idea of the book. And here, on one page you have a picture of a comic book, which is maybe the influence of Disney, like after the war they sell lots of Disney films and this is the outcome of that. And then on the next page you have someone who has suffered from radiation.

He goes from one photograph that has almost no meaning (vgl. Graham 1995: 9. Artificial Roses in Bell Jar, Tokyo 1995) to a photograph of the army, you know, here this is of Yasukuni shrine (vgl. Graham 1995: 10. State Shinto Procession Painting, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 224). And maybe you are aware of the fact that there are a lot of issues about the prime minister visiting the Yasukuni shrine. And the picture of the calendar is maybe representative of the fact that nowadays Japanese are only concerned about their own family, like: ›my house‹, their own personal happiness, which is very different from the Japanese attitude a long time ago.

Even whenever the war is mentioned, they use certain words. When there is talk of the end of the war, they say ›when the war ended‹ and not, for example, ›when Japan was defeated‹. They don't display any kind of feeling for something bad happened. And now the prime minister visits the Yasukuni shrine, which is where the people who are responsible for the war are buried and he is going there and praying for them. I am sure, when the chancellor of Germany went to Hitler's grave it would be a big deal in Europe. In order for Japan to achieve this kind of economic success, they had to destroy a lot of nature. Japan is a small country and they don't have so many

plants and things like that. Maybe the photographer took a picture of the tree as if this was bandaged. [...]

A lot of pictures that I have seen taken by Europeans or Americans are often of Japanese men wearing glasses. I am wondering why. Do you have any idea?

B.L.: No.

E.T.: I think it is a really strong work by the artist. It is showing a photograph as a photograph and not some kind of art. It is what the camera really sees. And all the pictures he has taken and edited in this fashion have a strong message and I like it.

It is a criticism of the material civilization or culture.

It would be nice to have an exhibition with this work.

B.L.: Yes, I think so, too, as it has never been shown in Japan.

E.T.: In Japan there are not many people who would understand.

B.L.: Yes, that's what other people told me.

E.T.: Photographers would understand, as photographers are the only ones who really studied photography in Japan and the average layman doesn't have much information.

Now, where is this photographer from?

B.L.: She is a young photographer from Germany, she was born in 1968 and she has been visiting Japan in 1998 and 1999. This is the book she made out of her photographs and it came along with an exhibition shown in 2002.

E.T.: Where is the publisher?

B.L.: It was an exhibition catalogue published by the Sprengel Museum in Hanover.

E.T.: It is in Japanese as well.

B.L.: If you have a look on the outside you can see that it is made for a Japanese and a Western way of using it. That was the intention of the photographer. So in the beginning you have the German information and in the back the same in Japanese.

E.T.: Just like the other book you want my opinion on the documentary?

B.L.: Yes. This book is a very everyday approach to contemporary Japan and Neudörfl also picked a topic which she was basically looking after while photographing. But for me, why I originally decided to work on this book was, that I found the portraits quite striking. That was the hook that made me work with this book.

E.T.: Is there bamboo in Germany?

B.L.: Only in botanical gardens.

E.T.: The everyday background is clearly showing in the book. The pictures of the wave machine and the indoor skiing place, those pictures show what Japan is really like now. Because there is no nature you can go to easily if you live in Tokyo, you can't go skiing without traveling for a few hours and there are no clean beaches with big waves in Japan unless you leave the main islands.

The way in which these two books differ, except from the portraits, she is taking the pictures from far away, whereas Graham takes the pictures from very close up. That is another way of doing a documentary, there is no one way in which it has to be.

It is showing Japan from the city and from the country, from all different perspectives. There is even a picture of a festival in town. There are pictures of a faraway view and then on the next page you might have a close-up portrait: that is interesting.

In the past, I did a theme on life and death and I went to China. There were thousands of Japanese who were left in China after the war. Some were unable to evacuate and some were captured. Not just the military, but they had families. It was a colony of Japan. Even now there are still many Japanese people living in China. My method of taking the pictures was very similar to this. I took the background images of where they were living and also portraits of their faces.

It is a portrait of where Japanese people live. It has many different people, women and men, they appear from all different backgrounds. So it is showing where they live and what is going on. And that is an interesting theme.

Before I met you and before I saw these pictures, I wasn't sure whether a foreigner could really see Japan as it is. And today, seeing these books I am thinking that the younger generation has really changed from the previous generation just showing the pretty flowers and the geisha and the mountains and all that. Because society has changed, communication has changed, Europeans know that Japanese kids are into animation and even European kids are. It is easy to see more what is really going on than it was in the past.

B.L.: Even though I think these two works are very unique, because a lot of people still have a stereotyped view of Japan and these really stand out.

E.T.: I find the two books really pinpoint the real reality.

B.L.: Do you think this book points out a perspective that maybe a Japanese could not have on Japan? Or is it just a way of seeing a Japanese photographer might take up as well?

E.T.: This is something a Japanese person might come up with as well. Graham's work is much more powerful. This is something a Japanese person could think of, as terms of art it is not showing that kind of strong feeling. Graham's book has a really strong theme, the artist has a specific theme and it is pinpointing exactly what he is talking about. Neudörfel's way of looking is more Japanese, it is very quiet it is not direct, it's not sharp.

Why do you think this book is called Future World?

B.L.: I think it has to do with the image Japan has in Germany. It is perceived as this newly built and technologically up front country. And she thinks what she discovered in Japan was not only that, but it was kind of like something how you would have depicted the future in the 70s but she found it now. So this is playing with the image of Japan it has in Germany and what she found here and it is not as futuristic as other photographers try to tell.

E.T.: I like Graham's book better. I am wishing that the younger generation of Japanese photographers would be able to have ideas like that and take pictures dealing with more serious topics such as the war.

After the war America gave Japan democracy but it wasn't something we got for ourselves. We didn't fight for it we just received it. Even though we gained many things like the economic improvements we lost many things. We lost respect for elders or the moral code. The things that happened right after the war are affecting what is happening right now. Just recently this seems to be like everyday a murder or a child killed their parents or parents killed their child. Just two days ago there was an incident here in Kyushu, some truck driver hit a child and even though the child was alive he took it and dumped it in the woods to die.

I have dedicated my career to try to show what happened in the past and that can be like medicine to cure the immoral Japan. If you don't take care of the root of the problem, nothing can save. [...]

Momose: It is from a western point of view seeing an oriental side of Japan which Japanese don't really see anymore.

B.L.: Which one?

Momose: Both of them. Like the images of women with black hair. If you go to Tokyo now, most of the women have dyed their hair brown or blond. But at this time, I am looking only at the girls with the black hair. And that is a kind of orientalism.

E.T.: Momose has a sharp eye for pointing this out.

B.L.: Thank you for sharing your time and your opinions.

**Iizawa Kotaro***Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Iizawa Kotaro

Das Gespräch mit Iizawa Kotaro, Fotopublizist und Dozent am Tokyo College of Photography (Tokyo Sogo Shashin Senmon Gakko) hat in Tokyo am 26. Juni 2006 stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Iizawa Kotaro: Of course I have seen Graham's photographs, but now I can understand the meaning of this book. That's interesting.

Bettina Lockemann: Did you see it, when it was first published?

I.K.: Yes.

B.L.: Have you ever noticed photographs from Western photographers dealing with Japan? And do you think they have a different view from Japanese photographers?

I.K.: I think, some Japanese photographers take pictures like Graham, some Japanese photographers take pictures like Western people. And I think some Western photographers are influenced by Japanese photographers like Araki and Moriyama. I think it is difficult to strictly divide between Japanese and Western photography. It is difficult to understand.

B.L.: Do you think that European photographers, when they come to Japan, choose other topics than Japanese photographers? Or do they cover the same topics as Japanese photographers?

I.K.: For Japanese artists that image (vgl. Graham 1995: 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Hiroshima 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) is very strong. It is difficult to express such image in this concept. The atomic bomb is a trauma of Japanese people and for Japanese it is very difficult to express something about it like in this image. I can understand Paul Graham using such an image. Such image gives me a very strong feeling of difference. Hiroshima is like cancer for Japanese people.

B.L.: Let's talk about Graham's book. What is your impression, what are your feelings when you see the book?

I.K.: I don't know, when he takes pictures like this (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man#1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 239) if he is positive or negative. But I feel he is negative with such faces. If Japanese people would take pictures like this, their feelings would be positive. This is a little bit negative for me. But it is very interesting. Maybe Japanese photographers cannot understand the meaning of this landscape (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. Toy Animal Procession, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 226). That landscape is very usual in our daily life. They cannot understand or rather they cannot find such a scene. It is very cute and beautiful and strange, but maybe a European photographer can understand such a strangeness of daily life.

B.L.: You think for Japanese photographers this scene would be too common to notice?

I.K.: Yes. Some Japanese young photographers can take pictures like that. [...] There are a lot of similarities.

B.L.: Do you think, for a Western photographer this is a special way to see Japan?

I.K.: Not a special way, maybe, but it is very difficult...

But the faces... They are very impressive faces (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235) faces [öffnet Neudörfls Buch auf einer Porträtseite].

Maybe Western photographers are interested in Japanese women's faces. They are like masks, maybe, like Nô-masks. French philosopher Roland Barthes published a book where he said that Japanese faces are like Nô-faces, just like a surface, without any expression. Just with the eyes like a slit or a hole, so maybe this is Western way of thinking. The eyes are the entrance to the inner spirit so maybe we can understand a person through the eyes, their soul and their inner feelings. But Japanese eyes are just a slit so they cannot enter their inner space.

B.L.: Do you think European photographers think that you cannot see the feelings of Japanese people?

I.K.: Yes, so they express Japanese faces like a Nô-mask, just the surface. That is different from the Japanese way. This face is not only surface (vgl. Graham 1995: 38. Yuka, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 222). She expresses her feeling on her face. But it is very rare. These faces are very similar (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992/ 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222).

Ah, surface, surface, surface... (vgl. Graham 1995: 49. Rainbow Sugar, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 231).

B.L.: Do you think that he is dealing with a special topic in his book, like a special theme or do you think this is about Japan in general?

I.K.: I don't know why he chooses such a theme or such a subject.

B.L.: I mean there are a lot of different pictures. You have the women, the men, the engines, the historical imagery... I was wondering if you can relate to them, if it's possible to bring them together or if you have trouble doing that.

I.K.: For Japanese this is not so strange. It is like a collage or a mosaic. Japanese culture itself is a mosaic culture so many things come together, we can see many things at once. The way of arrangement of photography is not so rare in Japanese style. For instance Moriyama, Tomatsu, Araki, almost all of their books are like that. Maybe Paul Graham studied such a way of the Japanese style, so he uses that style in his book. It is not so strange for me. [...]

[blättert Graham] Hard and soft things. The reason of pictures the contrast between hard and soft.

B.L.: I was wondering how you feel about the historical image material he includes in the book, like the atomic cloud, the surrender photograph or the imperial army and Yasukuni-imagery? And also the combinations like this (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph; Hiroshima 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222).

I.K.: Visual shock?

B.L.: Yes but also the idea of including historical image material in general.

I.K.: Japanese photographers want to forget these images, but our history cannot be erased. So it is a blind spot of Japanese photographers, maybe they want to hide these images but Western photographers can conceive these images.

B.L.: Do you think it is rather natural also to point to historical events even in a book about contemporary society?

I.K.: Yes. Japanese young people were not taught the history of the Japanese role in World War II. It is a problem. Almost all contemporary Japanese photographers show no historical or social point of view, it is a very big problem for our photography. It is not so good. It is maybe the system of instruction, teaching in the school, there is no lecture of contemporary history, that part is very small. It is difficult to explain in my poor English, I'm sorry.

B.L.: You said that you have the impression that the women are depicted with faces like a mask. I was wondering how you feel about the gestures? Do you think it is very special?

I.K.: It is very typical for Japanese women. It is a position of defense, I think. Japanese women face many problems of being attacked so they are afraid of such an attack and the way of defense became their daily way of behaving.

B.L.: Is it to be safe from anything from the outside?

I.K.: Yes. It is very interesting, because I think Japanese photographers would not be able to picture such a gesture. I think Paul Graham is very in-

terested in these gestures. Women are afraid of the attack from the outside. Japanese girls are taught not to express their feelings or their opinions, so they have difficulties to express their feelings naturally. They hesitate to express their feelings with these gestures. They stopped to express their feelings directly.

B.L.: That's very interesting.

I.K.: Gestures are very important. They are very quiet expressions, not strong expressions, but very important expressions for them.

B.L.: Do you think Paul Graham achieves to tell something about Japan in his book, that other photographers don't show?

I.K.: I think the details are very important. Many Western photographers cannot see the details, so, they show a total Japanese picture, but he shows details of Japanese life. That is interesting. I remember Wolfgang Tillmans, he came to Japan many times and took pictures here. Have you seen his pictures?

B.L.: Yes, I have seen quite a few. But my impression is that it doesn't really matter where he is for his work, he just takes things he thinks interesting and there is no difference if he is in Japan, the US or Germany. So there is not anything really he wants to tell about Japan.

I.K.: I see, there is no Japanese book by Tillmans. But are there any other books on Japan by Western photographers?

B.L.: Do you know Heiner Schilling?

I.K.: Ah, he is typical!

B.L.: He is always concentrating on the newest things.

I.K.: Typical Becher-Schule-style. [...]

B.L.: Maybe we should start to talk about Neudörfl's work. What is your first impression? How do you find Japan depicted in the book?

I.K.: Maybe she is looking at the contrast between modern and traditional Japan.

B.L.: Do you think so?

I.K.: Yes.

B.L.: What makes you think that?

I.K.: Hmmm...

B.L.: I could not find traditional things in her work, that is why I am surprised.

I.K.: Japanese calligraphy... What do you think about this?

B.L.: Well, I have been studying Chinese a long time ago and now I have been studying Japanese for two years. I cannot read it, of course, but for me this clearly is writing.

I.K.: Almost all of these pictures are Western but some points show Kanji and Hiragana.

Do you think this is very Japanese (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 70)? Are there no such covered cars in European cities?

B.L.: I think, in European cities people have enough room for garages, I think. This is a sign of the limited space in Japanese cities

I.K.: Oh, I see. And Japanese people clean the cars every day.

Grouping like this, is it different from western (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 8; Lockemann 2008: 276)?

B.L.: I think, this is very natural and you can find a group like this in Europe as well. But the next picture, I think this is very different (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 9; Lockemann 2008: 276). It is very special.

I.K.: It is a very strong picture.

It is very difficult. There are a lot of subtle things in these pictures. I cannot find a way of reading these pictures. Some pictures are very interesting, but some are not so interesting for me.

B.L.: Is it too common? Or why do you think it is not interesting?

I.K.: In Graham's pictures I can find a point of view and that is interesting, but in her work I cannot find a point of view. *Future World*...

B.L.: What do you think of that?

I.K.: Hmmm... For her, this is the future? I don't know why it is called *Future World*. Will Berlin become like this? [...]

I think *Future World* is like irony, because she doesn't show the future. I also think it is very difficult to explain the expression of such faces. I don't know why.

It is very easy to understand the bowing of the TV presenters at the end of the news-show (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 65; 66). But it is probably very strange for you.

I am sorry, but I cannot say something about this work.

B.L.: Do you think Graham's book is more interesting than Neudörfl's?

I.K.: I think this one is interesting for me. *Future World*... *Empty Heaven*. This is also irony, I think. Empty, empty, empty. Empty is also a

very important and a difficult word. Maybe empty means ›ku‹. [schreibt ein Kanji]. ›Ku‹ is sky, but other meaning is also a Buddhist word. ›Ku soku zeshiki‹ [Buddhistische Weisheit, etwa: ›Nichts ist alles‹ oder: ›Leere ist die Form‹]. Empty is not negative for Japanese people, empty is a very important feeling for us. Life is empty, is not negative for us.

B.L.: I believe this is very important in Buddhism.

I.K.: Yes, it is Buddhist wisdom. And it is also sky. The Kanji means both.

B.L.: Yes, someone told me that before and I thought this is very interesting.

I.K.: Heaven is in the sky, so maybe it is empty like in ku. It is a nice title. I can use this word for an essay maybe, it is very interesting.

B.L.: Do you think these books show anything of Japan that would be interesting for Japanese people to look at?

I.K.: Graham's book?

B.L.: Yes, but also Neudörf's. Their way of seeing Japan, would that be interesting maybe for an exhibition, as their works have never been exhibited in Japan?

I.K.: These two works are very difficult. They are very complicated for Japanese people. Ordinary Japanese people cannot understand the way to read photography. They have a very simple feeling about photography. Photography is just a way of visual communication. So if they catch the meaning of this woman (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 222), then it's the end. So it's very difficult to publish such a high quality photography book in Japan. However, an exhibition is a possibility. Indeed there are museums or galleries of photography and the consciousness of photography has changed step by step in the past ten years. You have a possibility to exhibit such pictures in galleries and museums.

B.L.: I was very surprised when I found out that Graham's work has never been shown in Japan and I was wondering why. Maybe it is too critical?

I.K.: Yes, it is critical, but Japanese people like to see foreign people's opinions, so maybe they can accept such works in museums.

Neudörf's work was never shown in Japan?

B.L.: No.

I.K.: I'm not sure, it is very difficult.

B.L.: Thank you very much for the interview.

***Ikeda Yuko****Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Ikeda Yuko

Das Gespräch mit Ikeda Yuko, Kuratorin am Kyoto National Museum of Modern Art, hat in Kyoto am 1. Juni 2006 stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Bettina Lockemann: Bevor wir über die Bücher sprechen, möchte ich Sie fragen, ob Ihnen schon einmal Fotografien von Europäern mit Japanbezug aufgefallen sind und ob Sie diese bemerkt haben, weil sie entweder besonders stereotyp waren oder aber weil sie einen anderen Blick auf Japan gezeigt haben.

Ikeda Yuko: Ich habe persönlich nicht so viel mit fotografischen Arbeiten zu tun. Einmal war ich verantwortlich für eine Ausstellung zeitgenössischer deutscher Fotografie, insbesondere der Becher-Schule. Das war vor ca. acht oder zehn Jahren. Und damals hatte nur Thomas Struth auch Japan-Bilder geschaffen. Aber er hat gar keine so typische oder stereotypische Japanfotografie gemacht. Eher ganz intensive Familienporträts und Ausschnitte aus der Stadtlandschaft. Deswegen kann ich nicht so gut mit den anderen Fotoarbeiten über Japan vergleichen.

Unser Chefkurator ist leider gerade nicht da, aber er betreut auch unsere Fotosammlung. Und vor ein oder zwei Jahren hat er eine große Reihenausstellung mit japanischen Fotografen gemacht, wie z.B. Tomatsu Shomei und er hat ein ganz stereotypisches Japanbild gemacht, aber eben von japanischen Fotografen. Er hat unterschiedliche Themen ausgewählt über Kyoto oder Nagasaki, also ganz bekannte touristische Orte, und hat dann Maeko-san [Geisha während ihrer Lehrzeit] oder Geiko-san [Geisha] fotografiert oder berühmte Schreine. Eben so stereotypische Themen, aber trotzdem sind sie ganz fremd oder manchmal sehr exotisch, eben auch für Japaner. Das war sehr interessant für uns. Deswegen kann man vermutlich sagen, dass bei wirklich guten Künstlern der Unterschied zwischen japanischer oder europäischer Sichtweise manchmal gar keine Rolle spielt. Aber natürlich, welchen Punkt der Landschaft oder welche Art von Porträt den Künstler interessiert, sind schon unterschiedlich und manchmal hat der europäische Fotograf ganz interessante Punkte ausgewählt oder herausgenommen.

B.L.: Sie sagen, Sie haben die Arbeit von Paul Graham schon einmal gesehen. Was ist denn so Ihr Eindruck von dieser Arbeit?

I.Y.: Es ist für mich schon ganz interessant. Besonders die Frauen tragen schon sehr andere Kleidung als man heutzutage trägt. Alle Frauen sehen ein bisschen altmodisch aus, aber das kommt nicht vom Künstler, sondern von der Zeit. Sie zum Beispiel (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. *Girl with White Face*, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235) hat lange als Sprecherin in der National- sendung gearbeitet.

B.L.: Ach so? Das heißt, sie ist richtig bekannt?

I.Y.: Ja, würde ich schon sagen. Sie hat vor einer bestimmten Zeit in Osaka für die NHK gearbeitet, deshalb habe ich, als ich das Buch zum ersten Mal gesehen habe, gedacht, dass sie mir ja ganz bekannt vorkommt. Wieso wurde sie schon in diesem Buch aufgenommen?

B.L.: Das finde ich ja interessant, weil mir das noch niemand gesagt hat. Meine Interviewpartner haben zwar sehr oft auf dieses Bild reagiert, aber niemand hat erwähnt, dass diese Dame aus dem Fernsehen bekannt ist.

I.Y.: Sie nimmt jetzt oft am Vergnügungsprogramm von NHK teil, aber vor drei oder vier Jahren hat sie als Sprecherin für die Morgennachrichten in Osaka gearbeitet. Also vielleicht können Leute sie hier in diesem Gebiet erkennen, aber nicht in Tokyo. Sie sieht jetzt aber schon sehr anders aus. Und ihre Geste ist ganz interessant.

Mich interessiert, warum Graham so fasziniert ist von sprechenden Frauen. Also alle Frauen, die hier aufgenommen wurden, sprechen etwas oder wollen mit den anderen sprechen.

B.L.: Ja, es gibt immer diese Gesten und sie schauen nicht zum Betrachter.

I.Y.: Das ist eine typische Haar- mode damals (vgl. Graham 1995: 18. *Curl #1*, Tokyo 1992), aber jetzt nicht mehr. Sind das künstliche Blumen (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. *Artificial Cherry Blossom*, Tokyo 1991; Lockemann 2008: 233)?

B.L.: Ja.

I.Y.: Sein Blick, finde ich, geht immer so ein bisschen fanatisch ins Detail. Das Gestänge der Brille. Er interessiert sich gar nicht für die Person selbst, sondern er interessiert sich für die Brille mit Gesicht, aber nicht für das Gesicht mit Brille. Oder Haare oder andere Details. Aber ich kann nicht so einen fremden Blick aus den Fotografien herauslesen, man kann schon sagen, dass diese Fotos auch von japanischen Fotografen aufgenommen worden sein könnten.

B.L.: Finden Sie denn, dass das Buch einen besonders typischen oder besonders außergewöhnlichen Blick auf Japan zeigt?

I.Y.: Nein, solches historisches Foto (vgl. Graham 1995: 48. *Hirohito and Imperial Army Photograph*, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 229) ist schon ganz interessant und etwas fremd für die junge Generation. Ich finde sie aber nicht außergewöhnlich.

B.L.: Können Sie denn allgemein ein Thema benennen, mit dem sich der Künstler beschäftigt, können sie thematische Schwerpunkte herauslesen?

I.Y.: Das ist ein bisschen schwierig.

B.L.: Weil es ja doch sehr unterschiedliche Motivwelten sind.

I.K.: Ja, das sind ein bisschen zu unterschiedliche Motive. Z.B. dies hier: (vgl. Graham 1995: 5. Cat Calendar, Tokyo 1989; Lockemann 2008: 219). Das ist schwierig für mich. Vielleicht ist für ihn die Kombination Snoopy und Katze interessant? Manchmal ist es ein bisschen schwierig, sein echtes Interesse für jedes Motiv herauszufinden. Solche Geste hier... (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235) oder das ist wie ein Foto einer Mishima-Type... (vgl. Graham 1995: 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) oder so ein Cartoon... (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) oder solche künstliche Blumen... (vgl. Graham 1995: 9. Artificial Roses in Bell Jar, Tokyo 1995) das ist schon auch für uns kitschig. Oder hier der Schrein, das ist ganz typisch, auch immer wieder ein heißes Thema bei uns (vgl. Graham 1995: 10. State Shinto Procession Painting, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 224), damals war das aber noch nicht so. Teilweise interessiert er sich auch sehr für solche mechanischen Sachen...

B.L.: Ja, das sind alles Automotoren.

I.Y.: Mit den Haaren, das kann ich schon verstehen, das war schon damals eine außergewöhnliche Sache. Und eine solche Sache, ist das typisch japanisch? In Deutschland kann man solche Bäume nicht sehen (vgl. Graham 1995: 17. Wrapped Tree #1, Financial District, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 232)?

B.L.: [...] Allgemein wohl eher nicht. In Tokyo habe ich aber schon einige solcher Bäume gesehen.

I.Y.: Also in Kyoto gibt es davon nicht viele. Vielleicht sieht man manchmal Bäume, von denen einige Teile umwickelt sind, aber nicht so ganz umwickelte Bäume. Sie werden so mit Stoff oder mit pflanzlichem Material umwickelt, um sie vor Tieren zu schützen, aber es sieht schon ein bisschen anders aus. Das ist schon eine kitschige Sache (vgl. Graham 1995: 34. Hanging Decoration, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 291). Das ist für mich schon sehr schwierig zu sagen, [was der Fotograf da sieht]. Junge japanische Fotografen nehmen auch solche Themen auf. Es sind traditionelle, aber sehr kitschige Motive aus der Stadt. Und ich kann nicht genau sagen, ob solche jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstler nach eigenen Gedanken solche Motive herausnehmen würden oder von den europäischen oder ausländischen Fotografen beeinflusst wurden. Natürlich haben sie schon viele Sachen gesehen...

B.L.: Ich denke, auch nachdem was ich an japanischer Fotografie gesehen habe, dass man da manchmal gar nicht so klar trennen kann. Weil vieles durchmischt wird, und europäische und japanische Einflüsse Wechselwirkungen entfalten.

I.Y.: Also wenn junge Leute sich ein bisschen mit japanischen traditionellen Sachen beschäftigen, ob es edle oder kitschige Sachen sind, spielt keine Rolle, gibt es nicht mehr so große Unterschiede zwischen Japanern und Europäern.

B.L.: Wobei sich mir dann immer die Frage stellt, ob bei solchen Sachen dem Fotografen bewusst ist, dass es sich um etwas traditionell japanisches handelt, was aber hier eine kitschige Form angenommen hat oder ob es nur um das kitschige Element geht.

I.Y.: Mindestens die jungen japanischen Künstler wissen schon, wie eine solche kitschige Sache funktioniert, einfach als eine Dekoration für einen öffentlich Markt oder so. Aber die einzelnen Formen, wie die runden weißen oder rosa Formen oder hier wie dieses alte Geld, die Kleinigkeiten der kitschigen Motive sind vermutlich nicht so verständlich für junge Japaner. Die Grundfunktion kennen sie schon, denke ich – hoffe ich zumindest – aber die größere Faszination bilden für solche Leute die kitschigen Oberflächlichkeiten. In diesem Sinne gibt es nicht so viele Unterschiede zwischen Europäern und Japanern. Die europäischen Künstler wissen vielleicht auch schon ein bisschen was das ist, aber dann sind sie vor allem fasziniert von der Form.

Das ist schon interessant, ich überlege, für welche Teile er sich interessiert (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man #1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 259). Die Kombination oder nur die Brille, es ist schwierig zu sagen.

B.L.: Es gibt zwei oder drei Porträts, wo die Männer keine Brille tragen.

I.Y.: Das sieht dann ganz anders aus.

Gerade habe ich in Paris eine Ausstellung von Jürgen Teller gesehen. Ende letzten oder Anfang dieses Jahres war er in Tokyo und hat dort fotografiert. Besonders in heißen Quellen oder im Ryokan. Das war sehr kitschig, aber es ist schwierig zu sagen, wie kitschig diese Fotografien sind. Z.B. hat er die Bilder nicht so rechtwinklig aufgenommen, sondern die Kamera immer geneigt. Oder er hat dann auch solche kitschigen Motive fotografiert und in der heißen Quelle sich selbst und auch mit seinem Sohn. Für mich ist das sehr interessant. Nur die Motive allein sind nicht so fremd für uns, die sind ganz lustig oder interessant, aber es ist nicht so wichtig, ob solche Fotos von Europäern aufgenommen wurden. Aber wenn er selbst oder sein Sohn oder seine Frau darin aufgenommen wurden, dann ist das total fremd für uns. Das ist eine große Entfremdung für uns. Das ist ganz typisch Japan, aber er ist als Europäer mitten darin, in einem Foto. Diese Erfahrung ist sehr interessant für mich. Daraus kann man schließen, wie körperlich er selbst mit solchen japanischen Themen arbeitet. Indem er das in dem Foto ganz konkret reflektiert.

Das ist nicht so typisch japanisch oder (vgl. Graham 1995: 49. Rainbow Sugar, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 231)? Ein bisschen kitschig.

Ja, sie machen immer etwas mit ihren Händen (vgl. Graham 1995: 50. Yuki, Tokyo 1992).

Er interessiert sich für so kurvige Linien hier bei der Pflanze (vgl. Graham 1995: 54. Roots in Bottle, Tokyo 1992), aber auch bei den Automotoren.

Meinen Sie, dass er sehr typisch japanische Sachen herausgenommen hat?

B.L.: Also mein Eindruck ist, dass er einerseits sehr typische Sachen herausgreift, zum Beispiel hier die Männer. In Deutschland hat man ja immer die

Vorstellung, dass alle Japaner gleich aussehen, wobei ich nicht weiß, wie man darauf kommen kann. Und dann fotografiert Graham die alle so standardisiert, dass das Stereotyp bestätigt wird. Aber weil man so nah dran ist, fängt man dann an, Unterschiede zu sehen. Dadurch, finde ich, gerät das Stereotyp ins Wanken, weil man einerseits damit konfrontiert wird, aber andererseits beginnt, darüber nachzudenken, dass es vielleicht doch nicht so ist. Und ich finde, dass er sehr viele typische Sachen aufnimmt, die kitschigen Sachen. Aber in Europa verbinden wir Japan auch ganz klar mit den Atombomben aber gleichzeitig auch mit dem problematischen Umgang mit der eigenen Schuldfrage. Er greift sehr viele Themen auf, die sehr bekannt sind in Europa und gleichzeitig benutzt er sie aber auf eine kritische Art und Weise. Und das finde ich so interessant an diesem Buch und das ist mir auch direkt aufgefallen.

I.Y.: Ja natürlich, beispielsweise solche Haare (vgl. Graham 1995: 18. Curl #1, Subway, Tokyo 1992), sie stammen von unterschiedlichen Frauen, aber wenn man sie nur von hinten sieht, dann sehen sie wirklich gleich aus.

B.L.: Und ich möchte Sie gerne noch einmal konkret fragen zu der Darstellung der Frauen hier, auch wenn sie ein bisschen wie aus den 80er Jahren aussehen. Aber vielleicht könnten Sie noch einmal etwas dazu sagen, wie er die Frauen zeigt, auch die Typen, die er ausgewählt hat.

I.Y.: Dazu kann ich nur sagen, dass das ganz normale Standard-Japanerinnen sind. Natürlich nur von der Außensicht. Nicht allzu modisch, aber auch nicht hässlich, sondern ganz durchschnittlich. Sie sehen nicht so charakteristisch oder eigentümlich aus, finde ich. Sie sieht ein bisschen wie eine typische Japanerin aus, auch schon für Japaner (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235). So klein und hübsch...

B.L.: Ich habe immer gedacht, das liegt auch daran, dass das Gesicht extrem weiß ist...

I.Y.: Ja, das ist zu weiß. Aber jetzt trägt man das nicht mehr. [...] Aber ich glaube, viele Japanerinnen sehen immer ganz gleich aus. Für mich schon. Oft, nicht nur vom Aussehen, sondern auch in ihren Gesten. Und wenn alte Frauen in einer Gruppe sind und miteinander sprechen sind ihre Gesten und ihre Stimmen oft fast gleich. Interessanterweise, wenn man so Frauen von hinten sieht, sind sie einfach gleich. Sie sehen ganz neutral aus. Und das ist ganz typisch japanisch. Und wenn man selbst in dieser Gruppe wäre, könnte man aber nicht erkennen, wie merkwürdig das ist. Nicht nur Japanerinnen, sondern auch die japanischen Männer. Sie haben immer einen dunkelblauen Anzug an und man kann nicht, wer das ist.

Und künstliche Blumen sind auch immer gleich (vgl. Graham 1995: 9. Artificial Roses in Bell Jar, Tokyo 1995).

Und so etwas gibt es auch häufig (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. Toy Animal Procession, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 226).

B.L.: Ein weiterer Aspekt, der mich interessiert, ist Ihre Ansicht über die Verwendung von historischem Bildmaterial und auch die Bildkombinationen. Er benutzt ja Bildkombinationen wie hier die vier Wolken gefolgt von den

vier Kätzchen. Besonders signifikant ist diese Bildkombination (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) Das ist ja schon sehr krass, diesen süßlichen Manga-Charakter und diese Verletzung durch Verbrennung von der Atombombe so nebeneinander zu stellen. Und mich würde interessieren, wie Sie das sehen. Ob Sie so eine Bildkombination besonders schockierend finden oder ob sie natürlich zusammengeht.

I.Y.: Also natürlich geht das vielleicht nicht zusammen, aber es ist auch nicht so schockierend, finde ich. Es sieht irgendwie fremd aus. Am Anfang kann man nicht so gut verstehen, wieso solche ganz unterschiedlichen Fotos miteinander kombiniert werden. Dieser Manga-Charakter ist ganz bekannt. Sie ist eine Zaubererin in diesem Cartoon und es gibt oft so merkwürdige Blitze. Vielleicht kann man das so schon ein bisschen vergleichen. Ich frage mich selbst, wieso er diese Szene so herausgenommen hat für eine Kombination mit einem solchen Foto. Das ist wirklich ein großer Kontrast.

B.L.: Wie sehen Sie denn seinen thematischen Umgang mit der japanischen Geschichte? Wir haben hier Hiroshima, wir haben eine Militärprozession im Yasukuni-Schrein, es gibt dann dieses Bild von der japanischen Kapitulation und dann gibt es noch die kaiserliche Armee... Wie sehen Sie denn als Japanerin solche Aspekte integriert in die Arbeit und wie bewerten Sie auch diese Kombination von heutiger Kultur und die Integration von Fotos aus der Geschichte?

I.Y.: Das kann man schon ganz gut kombinieren, so ein historisches Foto (vgl. Graham 1995: 48. Hirohito and Imperial Army Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 229) und dann so ein Japaner ohne Gesicht, nur mit der Brille (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man #1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 259) das sieht ganz durchschnittlich aus, jeder Mann sieht aus wie ein Mann ohne Gedanken. So kann man diese Fotos schon sehr gut mit dem Armee-Foto vergleichen. Deswegen kann man schon einen kritischen Blick herauslesen von dieser Bildkombination. Das ist nicht schockierend oder nicht so fremd, sondern sehr verständlich. Für einige alte Leute ist das sicher nicht so angenehm, sehr wahrscheinlich.

B.L.: So eine Thematisierung der japanischen Vergangenheit, ist das etwas, was es auch bei japanischen Fotografen gibt?

I.Y.: Hoffentlich gibt es das. Aber wenn japanische Fotografen ein solches Thema behandeln würden, würden sie manchmal sehr stark kritisiert, politisch kritisiert, deshalb ist es auch so schwierig bei uns. Das war vor drei Monaten ein großes Thema, da hat eine Studentin von der FU Berlin hier gearbeitet für die Vorbereitung ihrer Magisterarbeit über Yokota Danri und solche Plakate. Er hat viele historische Themen zitiert auf seinen Plakaten. Aber darüber konkret zu sprechen oder das zu kritisieren ist in Japan ganz schwierig. Vielleicht können die Deutschen so etwas schon ansprechen, aber bei uns ist das schon immer noch ein bisschen tabu über den Kaiser oder über die Schuld des Kaisers während des Weltkrieges zu sprechen. Ich mag solche Situation gar nicht gerne. Einmal im Museum für moderne Kunst der Toyama Präfektur, hat ein Künstler das Porträt des Kaisers ein bisschen böse benutzt

für sein Kunstwerk. Von der Stadtregierung wurde er so stark kritisiert, dass das Museum dieses Kunstwerk herausnehmen musste. Das war ein sehr großer Skandal bei uns, so ein Konflikt von Rechten und Linken. Solche und ähnliche Probleme passieren öfter bei uns.

B.L.: Das heißt, das wäre dann doch eher etwas, was diese Arbeit als eine Perspektive von außen kennzeichnet. Dass ein Engländer, ohne Probleme mit japanischen Institutionen zu bekommen, das aussprechen kann.

I.Y.: Ja. Deswegen behandeln so wenige japanische Künstler das japanische Kriegsthema. Künstler behandeln Krieg in Afghanistan oder im Irak, aber nichts mit japanischer Schuld, besonders nicht den 2. Weltkrieg.

B.L.: Wenn Ihnen jetzt nichts mehr auf dem Herzen liegt zu diesem Buch, dann könnten wir vielleicht zum anderen Buch kommen.

I.Y.: Aber mit japanischem Titel?

B.L.: [Erklärung des Konzepts]

I.Y.: Ah, nur in Deutschland gezeigt, aber mit japanischem Titel? Das ist ja interessant.

B.L.: Das war ihr Konzept, innerhalb der Arbeit die beiden Seiten zu integrieren. Die Arbeit ist natürlich für ein deutsches Publikum fotografiert, aber dann wollte sie das Japanthema noch einmal in der Buchgestaltung aufgreifen

I.Y.: Das sieht sehr eng aus (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 79; Lockemann 2008: 258) das ist ganz interessant, da sind zwei Leute, die putzen. Nicht Putzfrauen, sondern Putzmänner, glaube ich. Kann man dieses Buch von beiden Seiten anfangen anzuschauen?

B.L.: Ja, wenn man das blättert dann sieht man auch, dass die Bilder von der japanischen Seite zunächst eher linksseitig gestellt sind, was dann im Laufe des Buches wechselt.

I.Y.: Ah, das ist sehr interessant. Das ist dann eine unterschiedliche Reihung der Bilder...

Immer steht etwas im Zentrum.

Junge Männer sehen ganz anders aus als die alten Leute. Ihre Fotografien sehen eher konstruktiver aus als Grahams.

Ist das echt (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 39; Lockemann 2008: 274)?

B.L.: Das ist in einem künstlichen Bad, da kommen auch noch mehr Fotos, wo man das besser erkennen kann.

I.Y.: Ah ja, dort kann man es sehen.

Wenn ich vom Ausland zurückkomme, dann ist das immer sehr interessant, wenn ich hier in der U-Bahn fahre. In Europa haben alle immer unterschiedliche Kopfhare [Frisuren, Haarfarben]. Hier in Japan haben alle im-

mer ganz schwarze Haare, außer vielleicht die jungen Leute. Das ist dann immer ganz schockierend.

Und hier auf dem Foto (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 33; Lockemann 2008: 278) ist das auch so. Viele kleine schwarze Köpfe.

Das ist ein Erdbeben oder (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 29; Lockemann 2008: 268)?

B.L.: Ja, ein Simulationszentrum

I.Y.: Das ist merkwürdig, sie hat es von der gleichen Ebene aus fotografiert (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 17).

B.L.: Was ist so Ihr erster Eindruck, wie wird Japan thematisiert in dem Buch?

I.Y.: Ja oft steht schon die typische Geste im Vordergrund. Viele Fotografien zeigen japanische Zeichen. Und die Kombination der modernen architektonischen Strukturen und dann Natur, Baum, Bäume, so natürlicher Sachen. So die Stadtlandschaft mit den Häusern, das sieht sehr typisch japanisch aus. Ich finde nicht stereotyp, sondern das ist einfach die Wirklichkeit. Genau so ist es in Japan. Also sehr typisch japanisch, aber nicht stereotypisch, glaube ich. Das ist schon wichtig für die Künstlerin, nicht?

B.L.: Ja, auf jeden Fall. Ich denke man sieht auch, dass es um sehr Alltägliches geht. Das ist ja ein sehr alltäglicher Blickwinkel. Es geht nicht so sehr um das Besondere oder das Exotische. Es ist eben ein bisschen anders als bei uns, aber das ist eben tatsächlich so. Das jedenfalls ist mein Eindruck. Das es sehr subtil Japanisches zu zeigen, ohne ein stereotypes Japanbild zu zeichnen.

I.Y.: Ja. Wenn sie farbig fotografiert hätte, würde es vielleicht manchmal ein bisschen kitschig aussehen. Aber das schwarz-weiß kann ein bisschen solche kitschigen und oberflächlichen Blicke neutralisieren. Das Schwarzweiß, das Monochrome, macht die Struktur selbst zum Motiv, dadurch wird es irgendwie konkreter. Das sieht schön aus! (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 55; Lockemann 2008: 265). Das ist so ähnlich wie mit dem Bauhausfoto. Das hat etwas von Bauhaus- oder 30er Jahre Fotografie in Deutschland oder in Tschechien. Konstruktivismus. Das hat eine etwas ähnliche Atmosphäre oder Stimmung, glaube ich. Also eigentlich habe ich den Eindruck, dass sie sehr auf traditionelle oder moderne europäische Fotografie steht, aber mit dem japanischen Thema. Ganz anders als Graham, das ist ganz postmodern. Aber Neudörfls Fotografien selbst sehen für mich ganz traditionell europäisch aus. Das (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 64; Lockemann 2008: 280) kann man alles mit jungen Deutschen ersetzen, finde ich.

Das ist ganz anders als für Graham. Für ihn ist Japan ein ganz wichtiges Thema, für seine Fotos glaube ich. Für sie ist das, glaube ich, ganz anders. Denn für sie ist auch die Struktur des Fotos ganz wichtig um dann nachher etwas über Japan zu zeigen. Also bei ihm geht es zuerst um Japan, aber bei ihr nicht so vordergründig, finde ich. Weil sie auch nicht so stark kritisierend auf Japan schaut. Er kritisiert schon sehr stark, sie aber nicht.

B.L.: Können Sie vielleicht etwas über den Umgang mit den Porträts sagen in dem Buch?

I.Y.: Im Vergleich mit Grahams Fotos, sind das sehr natürliche Porträts. Oft sind das ganz lustige Momente, aber ich finde, es ist kein kritisierender Blick, sie zeigt einfach so den Menschen. Es ist sehr interessant, die porträtierten Frauen in Grahams Buch versuchen zu sprechen, aber in Neudörfls Buch versuchen die Porträtierten, etwas zu hören (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 56; Lockemann 2008: 280). Sie spricht, aber die anderen hören eher zu.

Finden Sie einen Unterschied zwischen den Porträts in beiden Büchern?

B.L.: Schon. [...] Die Nähe zu den Porträtierten ist ja sehr ähnlich in beiden Büchern und auch, dass die Porträtierten nicht in die Kamera schauen, und trotzdem finde ich die Porträts bei Neudörfl viel natürlicher als bei Graham. Wobei bei beiden Arbeiten die Porträts nichts über die Fotografierten aussagen. Bei beiden Arbeiten habe ich das Gefühl, es geht nicht um die Person als solche, sondern es geht mehr um den Blick auf diese Person.

I.Y.: Ja, das stimmt, da stimme ich Ihnen zu. Also vielleicht hat er versucht, so durchschnittliche Charaktere für junge Japanerinnen herauszunehmen, vielleicht, mit dem kritischen Blick. Bei Neudörfl sind es Porträts, von einfachen Personen, aber ohne Eigentümlichkeiten, sondern so durchschnittliche Personen. Die schwarzen Köpfe finde ich bei Neudörfl bildnerisch sehr interessant. So rhythmisch.

B.L.: Können Sie in dem Buch von Neudörfl einen thematischen Zusammenhang erkennen?

I.Y.: Ich denke, das ist einfach Wirklichkeit. Die alltägliche Struktur. Sie interessiert sich sehr für Strukturen und konstruktive Kombinationen mit den unterschiedlichen alltäglichen Motiven. Deswegen kann ich schon sagen, dass ihre Fotos sehr ästhetisch aussehen (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 60; Lockemann 2008: 265). Die horizontalen Linien mit der Autobahn und die Blumenkästen. Sehr alltägliche Sachen.

B.L.: Können Sie darin den Blick von außen sehen oder ist das eine Position, wie sie auch von japanischen Fotografen aufgenommen worden sein könnte?

I.Y.: Ich finde, das ist nicht so ein typisch europäischer Blick. Aber wenn man die moderne Fotografie in Deutschland der 20er und 30er Jahre gut kennt, kann man eine solche Essenz ganz einfach aus ihren Fotografien herauslesen. Und das ist schon ein Unterschied zu japanischen Fotografen, denn sie wurden oft nicht so trainiert und sie haben nicht so große Erkenntnisse über die moderne Fotografie der 20er und 30er Jahre in Deutschland. Und das heißt, sie sind von dem nicht beeinflusst. In diesem Sinne ist ihre Fotografie ganz europäisch, glaube ich.

B.L.: Also von der Gestaltung her ist es eher europäisch, aber von der Auswahl der Motive her eher nicht so.

I.Y.: So die Winkel zum Beispiel (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 49). Natürlich wurden auch einige japanische Fotografen von der klassischen Moderne beeinflusst. Wenn man das Japanische lesen könnte... Das ist ein bisschen spielerisch, weil da der Bauhausstil mit den japanischen Buchstaben kombiniert wird, das ist schon fast ein bisschen spielerisch oder lustig für uns. Aber auch wenn man japanisch nicht versteht, das spielt für das Verständnis der Bilder keine Rolle. Das ist mehr so ein Gestaltungselement.

B.L.: Denken Sie, dass es für Japaner interessant sein könnte, diese Arbeiten zu sehen? Oder dass es noch neue Aspekte über Japan offenbart?

I.Y.: Also für Japaner ist das vielleicht schon interessant. So für das ganz normale Publikum sind Neudörfls Fotografien sicher einfacher zu verstehen, für Grahams Bilder braucht man eine Erklärung, weil er einen etwas kritischen Blick zeigt.

B.L.: Aber tendenziell denken Sie schon, dass es interessant wäre.

I.Y.: Ja, schon, weil sich in der Zwischenzeit sehr viel getan hat.

B.L.: Meine Fragen sind alle beantwortet, vielen Dank für das Gespräch.



Kasahara Michiko

Foto: Bettina Lockemann

Gespräch mit Kasahara Michiko

Das Gespräch mit Kasahara Michiko, Chefkuratorin am *Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography*, hat am 12. Mai 2006 in Tokyo stattgefunden.

Leider hat Frau Kasahara einer Veröffentlichung des Interviews im Internet nicht zugestimmt.

**Kikuta Mikiko***Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Kikuta Mikiko

Das Gespräch mit Kikuta Mikiko, Kuratorin des Programms *European Eyes on Japan*, hat am 3. Mai 2006 in Tokyo stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Kikuta Mikiko: [blättert Graham] I have not seen this book before.

Bettina Lockemann: I did think that Graham exhibited his work in Japan, but then he told me he didn't. I haven't found out yet why. Both, Graham and Neudörfl did not show their work in Japan. I know that Elisabeth sent her book to some curators but they never invited her.

Before talking about the actual photos I would like to know what triggered the interest to establish a program like European Eyes on Japan?

K.M.: I'm not sure. I started to work on the project from catalogue number four, so there was another director from one through three. I heard that there was a French curator at first, French or Finnish, I don't know, but he wasn't Japanese. At first he wanted to have an exhibition about cities, like Tokyo, Paris, Berlin, something like that. And at first he asked the organizers of the EU-Fest to realize this project. So there was this project called *Tokyo Today* like *Japan Today*, *European Eyes on Japan* but with Tokyo. So there was this concept of inviting photographers from abroad to see the city, to interview others.

B.L.: Yes, so it was important that it were foreigners coming from the outside looking at Tokyo.

K.M.: Exactly. The concept was the same as *European Eyes on Japan*. So this guy made the concept at first and realized the *Tokyo Today* project. The concept remained and then the (supposedly) French curator and a Japanese curator started to do this concept of European Eyes on Japan.

B.L.: The idea, as I understand it, is to get people from the outside looking on Japan, proposing that they have a different view.

K.M.: Yes, it is very important for us, for the Japanese people, to know the point of view of foreigners, from people who live outside.

B.L.: Do you believe in this »other view«, do you think that it is like that, that foreigners have a different viewpoint and that you can see this in the photographs?

K.M.: Yes, not always, but sometimes I feel that I could not make these photographs. Also, many visitors of the exhibitions told me the same. Maybe it is not so important which is a very different view from the Japanese people, but to know that there are all these different viewpoints. Like you have your opinion and I have my opinion as opinion. I think that is the most important point.

B.L.: The fact that other people might judge differently than Japanese do?

K.M.: Also, when you have your opinion, I don't want to say that it's not correct, I'm right. You know, as Japan is an island – maybe you know the history, that until 100 and some years ago Japan was closed. At that time, Japanese people refused to listen to the opinion from others, from people from abroad. Also, the form of the island has a really strong impact on us, the Japanese people. As you, the Europeans, had to listen to the opinions of other people, because you live in Europe, you have the borders to other countries and they come to you and talk to you. But we don't have this kind of history, we are not used to listen to the opinions of other people. That is difficult and I think it is not so good. Now we are in the 21st century and we also had to accept some foreigners from abroad to work together and we also have many problems with refugees. We have to confront this problem, it is not possible to refuse them. We have to be more open. If not, Japan does not have a future. We cannot refuse anymore, this is the reality now, I think.

B.L.: What do you think is the main difference between the Japanese view on Japan and the European view on Japan? Is it more the topics the photographers deal with or is it more the way they depict Japan? Do they have a different kind of image language or is it more the topics they choose? Probably Japanese photographers choose other topics as they are working for people who know Japanese society and foreigners probably want to show something to Europeans.

K.M.: It is not very easy to explain, but I feel that (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. Toy Animal Procession, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 226) this kind of thing is so pretty but it is a kind of kitsch thing. We Japanese people are very used to this kind of thing, to see it, to have it, to buy it. But the scenery for Japanese feels so ordinary, that they probably would not take a picture. Of course, we can do it. Some young Japanese photographers would take a picture of this kind of thing. But thinking this is kind of a point of view of foreigners. Because we know that foreigners like this kind of thing because they think this is Japanese, this is Japan. So we are very conscious now what is the point of view of foreigners. And maybe topics are not so different, I think... But what exactly do you mean?

B.L.: For example, this book. I meant to ask you what you think after browsing through the book if you can say: yes, I understand what Paul Graham is talking about, the point he is trying to make. Because in the interview that

comes with the book he says that he felt very strongly about certain things he experienced while he was here and he has been traveling on and off to Japan for quite a while. He uses all this different imagery: the historical imagery, the manga imagery, he includes the race cars, he does the portraits and I was wondering if you can say after browsing through: oh this is the main topic he is relating to. Do you have an impression of what he wants to show the people (viewers) of Japan?

K.M.: Going back to the first question. Maybe this is not the correct answer, but three years ago we had this exhibition in Oita Prefecture with Margherita Spiluttini, Michael Danna and ... a Polish photographer with the *European Eyes on Japan* and at the same time the photographers who live in Oita had an exhibition; like Oita people's eyes on Oita. Actually, the topics were very different. Most Japanese photographers who live in Oita tried to shoot something near, something close to them, ordinary life, ordinary landscape, friends, family, something like that. The topics are a little bit the same to those of the European photographers, but I feel the works from the Japanese photographers are really lyric. So I really understand that they love where they live for example. They also may shoot some landscape even if it is not so beautiful, but I really felt they love it. But for example Margherita Spiluttini shot many landscapes in Oita but – maybe this is her style of photography – but she always keeps a distance.

B.L.: She does that at home too, though.

K.M.: I feel it is more cold, not lyric, nothing like that. But maybe this is her style so it does not apply to all Europeans in general.

B.L.: But maybe it is one way of Europeans dealing with their surroundings, with the places where they live, so maybe this is more a European way to keep a distance. But I don't know, for some photographers I know, I know that they do that...

K.M.: I will show you this catalogue.

B.L.: Is there a catalogue with both sides?

K.M.: Not with both sides, but with the works of the Japanese photographers. But you have Volume 5 with the works of the Europeans.

This is a very interesting question and I am also always thinking about it, but it is not so easy to explain. Sorry, I will think and maybe I will give you an answer later via email.

B.L.: Oh, yes, maybe you can think of something later...

What is your first impression after browsing through the books? Do you think it is a very typical or untypical or new way of seeing Japan?

K.M.: Well... [blättert durch Graham], ah, its 1995.

B.L.: I think he started in 1989 and photographed through 1995 coming back quite a few times.

K.M.: Yes, I think this is a way to look at Japanese because he picks up some keywords, like you said the cars, technology, atomic bomb, or something like kitsch things and also the attitude or actions of the Japanese people, like the gestures, this is very typical...

He picked very interesting elements, I think. And also his style to look at the world, I think this is a very good work.

B.L.: Ever since I saw this book, I always thought that he found a lot of very stereotypical things about Japan but then the way he shows them it makes you start to think about your stereotype of Japan. What is about it, when you see these sararii men who look kind of all the same and the way he photographs them you start to think: oh they look all different, and their skin, they have moles and...

K.M.: I think it is important when he shot these pictures because after the 1990s many photographers came to Japan and they started to shoot Japan I think. Before there were photographers like William Klein and others, but after the 90s there are many, many I think.

B.L.: Yes.

K.M.: So he came kind of at the border. If I see this kind of photography and I heard he was here last year and took these pictures, I would say, no, it is really stereotyped, but he has worked here almost ten years ago.

B.L.: Even more than ten years...

K.M.: I don't feel it to be a really stereotype thing. Not stereotype but...

B.L.: Do you think it is legitimate to put this kind of imagery together (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Hiroshima 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222), you have here the pink cute stuff and this atomic trauma images together, because I heard some people say, oh this is quite shocking. I don't know, I was wondering how you feel about it.

K.M.: I can say, I don't do it, never, because I am Japanese and I know the history of the atomic bomb and I know many people who were bombed. For example, some of my friends, their mothers and fathers were bombed in Hiroshima or my friend where their parents for example were in Hiroshima after the atomic bomb but their grandmother and grandfather were there. So I have some friends so I don't want to treat this matter, I am very careful, also to talk about it. I don't ever do this kind of mixture, but I can also understand if a photographer wants to put these things together. I don't feel he is very bad or he doesn't know Japan or the bomb. It's ok, because we are free, because if he really wants to do it, it's ok. Maybe some Japanese people don't feel good if they see these photographs together. But I can also say, this is the reality of this photographer but it is also our reality. We had this very heavy and bad history but we now are living today with these cute things. But this is also our contemporary life, it is today, I think.

Maybe also some Japanese people would not notice that it was something from the atomic bomb.

B.L.: Oh really, do you think so, because it is such an icon, I think.

K.M.: Well, especially – I don't want to say young Japanese people – but I think some of them are not interested in history and they also do not want to know and they are not interested in this kind of thing.

B.L.: The project Paul Graham did before this was on Europe, it is called New Europe, he was traveling through the European countries that are bound together by the EU and so he says that when he came to Japan he was quite shocked to see that people are not interested in the Japanese history at all. And he found that it is so on the surface, people do all these things not to get too close to the past emotionally and also to think about their own or their family history's fault like following the militaristic government and all that, and really destroying a lot of China and other countries. And he thought this was quite striking so he started to work with all these surfaces. So this is what he is trying to do with the images to stay on the surface but maybe transport a message that is further down below. By using all this pinkish imagery and combining it with the war time images as well.

K.M.: But the Japanese government tried to hide everything, you know, and maybe even if we wanted to know, we couldn't. But I am not so very pessimistic. For example, when I was young, when I was 20 years old, in 1988 or 89 it was bubble, the economy was very strong and I really did not think at all of the atomic bomb at that time. I really wanted to have fun and do gorgeous things. And then I really started to think about these kinds of things: war, the atomic bomb, something like that, also the relationship between the United States and Japan or many things, I don't know, maybe ten, maybe just six, five years ago I think. I thought if I don't think about this matter, I have to stop here. War or atomic bomb or the problem of Okinawa, I can leave them, I can survive here, too, but just I don't want to do it. For example, last year when I was watching TV, there was a TV program of kamikaze and I don't know, I cried and cried and cried. Maybe I am getting older, so I think also young Japanese people can be like me, that when they are getting older they start to think.

B.L.: Do you know if this is a subject at all for Japanese photographers? To deal with aspects of the past like political aspects or do you know anybody who has been working in this field?

K.M.: ...you mean Japanese photographers?

B.L.: ...or is this something very European to notice maybe?

K.M.: No, no, many Japanese photographers take pictures about also this kind of thing: war.

B.L.: But is it more about the trauma of the atomic bomb or is it also about the Japanese war crimes, this side of the Japanese history?

K.M.: They take the pictures just to think what the war was for Japanese people, for me, for you... Maybe Graham picked these images as icon... But the Japanese photographers working with this subject maybe they think deeper about the war, what it was. Maybe this photographer doesn't think, but maybe he thinks that he is thinking. They are different points of view, I think. Like Tomatsu Shomei, he took many photographs of the atomic bomb. Yes, someone also takes pictures not only this kind of very strong images, but they took some part, for example the people or the landscape, but thinking about the war. It is also different, I think.

When you saw it, was it too strong or too much?

B.L.: No, I mean, when you see so many photographs, I am not that easily shocked anymore.

K.M.: Me too...

B.L.: But then, when I started thinking about it, I felt this was really strong to put these things together. And I was wondering if other people, who are more easily shocked, if they felt bad about it. But on the other hand, I always felt this is quite shocking, but then you start thinking about parallels and that is, I think what he intends to do, to trigger an emotional reaction and to make people think about things, you know, so for example he has the four atomic bomb images and the four little kittens. So he is playing with all this kind of metaphors as well, so I think he is trying to put images together that create an emotional reaction in the viewer.

K.M.: For example, there was a Dutch photographer, Theo Baarth, participating in this project and he went to Hiroshima, to shoot. At first, when he was still in The Netherlands before leaving for Japan he asked me many things about Hiroshima and the atomic bomb. But then he came to Hiroshima city, he saw the landscape, he saw the people and then he decided not to mention the atomic bomb. So he took many pictures just of landscape, like streets or contemporary architecture, something like that. Because he thought, this is not my subject. So he also at first was interested in doing something, but at last he didn't do it, so this is also the right attitude.

B.L.: Yes definitely.

So how do you feel about the women depicted in this book?

K.M.: It is very interesting for me to remember the 80s and 90s.

B.L.: Do you think that a lot has changed since he took these pictures, how women behave or how they are seen?

K.M.: Not very big changes, because clothes and how to make up changes very quickly. It changes in the sense... these suits, this pink... (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235).

B.L.: But I mean she is very special, there are other women. She is dressed really poshly, whereas others are kind of dressed more everyday like....

K.M.: He has very good eyes, I think, these curls are quite trendy... (vgl. Graham 1995: 18. Curl #1, Subway, Tokyo 1992).

B.L.: Back then, I suppose, I have been looking for them, but couldn't find any now...

K.M.: I have it at my home (vgl. Graham 1995: 9. Artificial Roses in Bell Jar, Tokyo 1995).

B.L.: Oh, such a flower arrangement?

K.M.: Yes, they will never be dead. They are like dried...
But he doesn't shoot architectures?

B.L.: No. I think the only images outside are some of the trees here in Kasumigaseki, other than that he does mainly indoor work. And those are at night, only. I think that's very unusual, I haven't seen other photographers do that. And I have read one article on his work where the critic said: Well, he's not showing anything of what Japan is like. And then he counts all the technical gaming gadgets and the architecture and everything that you see in basically every other Japan-photography but what he didn't touch. So the critic is just asking for what he already knows about Japan. I thought that was very funny. He says: He doesn't show Japan like it is. I thought that is really interesting because: How is Japan? What is Japan? I mean, he doesn't claim that he wants to show Japan in its entirety, he is more interested in the way the past and the present go together or not go together. Like here, where he erases the tenno with the flashlight out of the picture (vgl. Graham 1995: 48. Hirohito and Imperial Army Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 229).

K.M.: I am wondering why he was interested in the history of war.

B.L.: I think because it is something that is very present in Europe to deal with the past.

K.M.: Not only the atomic bomb?

B.L.: No, no, for example in Europe, Germany is dealing constantly with its past and for example Graham traveled to Spain and there they are trying to get rid of the Franco dictatorship. So he found that in Europe people are dealing with the past in one way or the other. Sometimes trying to compensate for the bad things that they did to other countries, sometimes not really. But somehow there is a discussion about it. And what he found when he came here was that there is no discussion. So this is why he got really interested in it, in the missing discussion, he started to look at what happened and why people aren't dealing with the past.

K.M.: You know, maybe at the time, late 80s and mid 90s, many artists, photographers, were not so interested in the globalization. For example, now I know many, many photographers and artists who like something universal. Even if they come to Japan and do want to take pictures of traditional things

or stereotypes they are looking for something similar or same as Europe or European things. This is not only in photography, it is also in contemporary art, I find there are some artists like this.

Don't you think so? Now the artists or photographers they don't look for more particular things in this country, they are looking for more universal things.

B.L.: I am not sure, I have seen so many photographs of Shibuya crossing, for example, that are basically the same, so I don't know why anybody would like to go there again and make the same pictures again, you know. But still I think there are a lot of photographers looking for this manga and gaming kind of society. I don't know if there are so many people interested in the past. I for myself was really surprised to find so many buildings that have been constructed in the 1920s and 30s for example, that are influenced by European architecture. And all these architects trying on one hand to do European architecture but then find some Japanese way to do it and things like that. I think there are still a lot of things, historically seen, that have not been communicated to Europe yet. I have the impression that most photographers are looking for this very contemporary architecture and this very exaggerated new and loud society, which they think Japan is like. And they are not looking for other things. I have seen more of this kind of imagery than any others.

K.M.: Yes and also some artists, photographers, are a little tired of Japan, I think.

B.L.: Yes, probably...

K.M.: Many of my European friends now want to go to China. But in the 90s they really wanted to come to Japan, to Tokyo mainly, but now they want to go to China.

B.L.: But don't you think that it is the same idea they had about Tokyo in the 90s they have now about China at the beginning of the 21st century? Because I think the imagery is basically the same, with all this hyperactivity going on, the building boom and money, you know, the megalopolis. This was Tokyo in the 1990s and now it's Shanghai. I think it's kind of boring in a way. I think it is much more interesting to come to Japan right now, after it is all cooling down a little bit to look at it in a different way maybe.

But maybe we should start looking at the other book, because there is more architecture and things like that.

K.M.: Maybe she also took photographs of stereotyped images of Japan like this (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 54) or also this one (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 76/77; Lockemann 2008: 260).

B.L.: Is there anything you find particularly striking about this book?

K.M.: Something, but... I'm not sure, but maybe she is in the middle, she is not looking for something strange or particular or mysterious, or exotic... Also, she does not take many pictures of the very traditional Japanese things

like this maybe (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 5; Lockemann 2008: 256), but only some pictures. And I don't know how many times she came to Japan exactly...

She was not collecting just strange or strong images I think, because she could have taken more pictures of this kind (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 18) but maybe the images can become very strong, because [she uses] very strange land- [city-]scapes...

B.L.: Do you think it is this kind of everyday-imagery? Because when you say she did not collect particular things, not the very strong imagery that you would connect to people taking pictures in Japan?

When I first saw the pictures I was really struck by the portraits, because I found them very special, as usually Europeans take pictures of Japanese people – or Asian people in general – in a very stereotyped way, in a »they-all-look-alike-way« of seeing. And here for the first time I was seeing portraits of Japanese people being very much themselves and only on the second view I saw: oh, these are Asians or Japanese people, which at first I didn't notice because I found their personalities are quite strong in the images. I found that very new in seeing imagery on Japan, to see people depicted in this way, for example. Maybe you can say something about what you think of the portraits.

K.M.: I agree with you in a way, but when I saw the portraits I also saw the distance. I mean, maybe she didn't ask them...

B.L.: She did, they all knew, but she didn't want them to look in the camera.

K.M.: I know some photographers who do this kind of work, ask the people portrayed not to look in the camera. Maybe some of them didn't know when she was pressing the button. I was wondering why she or these photographers want to keep the distance. I said, she is in the middle between Europe and Japan. Here it is the same thing, she keeps the distance. Maybe she knows that she cannot see the Japanese way, but maybe she is a European who knows, likes, feels something for Japan.

B.L.: So you think her view shows that she knows a lot about the places she photographs?

K.M.: Not knows...

B.L.: She observes very well?

K.M.: Yes, maybe she is that kind of observer. And in this point I feel something very Japanese, I don't know, a little shyness... I thought he [Graham] took the pictures of the Japanese women, very stereotyped women, as one might think. I don't know if this is stereotyped or not, but maybe many people think this is a stereotype.

B.L.: Maybe Japanese people think that too?

K.M.: Also, maybe, yes. But I feel more Japanese about them, from her portraits.

B.L.: That they look more Japanese than the stereotyped people?

K.M.: Yes, I feel like this, simply the eyes they are very Japanese. These are the actions we do all the time (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 65/66).

B.L.: I would like to explain, the topic that she was dealing with while she was here. She had the impression that security is a very important aspect that goes throughout the entire Japanese life in a way. Not only with earthquakes, but also with having this kind of swimming or surfing possibilities, or like skiing in the summer and these things. So she was basically looking for various ways to depict this aspect. And I think this was very interesting as she took pictures always with this layering from above which is a kind of protection in a way. And that is what I found very interesting to have all these different aspects of this notion of security.

K.M.: Actually, many European photographers told me about the security.

B.L.: I mean, it is very striking because when you come here for the first time you notice that everybody wants to make you feel safe. So I think that is something for Europeans to notice quite quickly when they come here. But I thought that the way she is dealing with it is very laid back in a way, because it is not hitting your face right away. You might find it in there, but you don't have to and this is probably also because she always keeps a distance and is an observer who is not really part of what's happening but always staying a little bit apart but still going where other people go as well.

K.M.: The format is really interesting.
But did she find the future in Japan? Future scenery?

B.L.: I think, why she chose this title was that she felt that in a way some things are very futuristic but in the other way they are everyday-like and they are not as outstanding as you might see in a science fiction movie. I think it feels more like a science fiction movie in the 70s, where you feel like the world looks like this pretty much now. I think that was the idea of the future. As I said before, there are so many photographers who are looking for this very striking architecture which is very particular and also looking particularly Japanese and futuristic if you may say like going to Odaiba or Minato Mirai in Yokohama or places like that.

K.M.: I can say something for this photography, but it can be also now.

B.L.: Do you think its kind of timeless in a way?

K.M.: Maybe you can find some things of the 90s, but you can still see them now this kind of scenery (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 69/68) is still around.

B.L.: So do you think this is a perspective that you wouldn't expect from somebody Japanese? Or do you think this is a perspective that only someone from Europe might see?

K.M.: No, maybe someone Japanese can take a picture like this. When I see for example the place here (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 38; Lockemann 2008: 273), I don't say many, but some European photographers asked me to go to these kind of places. But most of the pictures I don't feel that much a European point of view.

Did she also take very much pictures of many stereotype things?

B.L.: No, not at all, she wasn't interested in this kind of thing. The way she works is that she usually prepares quite a lot doing quite a lot of reading before she starts working somewhere and she is always looking for this rather day to day scenery and not to have all the striking things, by stepping back a little and observing things, that's the way she is working. And she was definitely looking for something that is Japanese but not in the way Japanese that other photographers show Japan.

K.M.: This is more photography [than Graham].

B.L.: You mean it is more documentary?

K.M.: No, I don't know if I can say, but she has good eyes to take pictures, I can't explain very well. When I say good photographer, she or he has good ... the camera is the camera, it's just a machine, but photography is from the concept, from your brain, but the more from your body, also eyes, body, you don't know how they are connected and you have also to use the machine. Maybe you can't think what you shoot but your finger takes the picture. So this action eyes, finger, brain, body and the machine, this is very strange. Also, many photographers told me this is an image about bla, bla, but I see many things that they don't think of or didn't think, but photography can show me everything. So who has this talent is a good photographer. There might be things that he or she doesn't know but photography shows everything, the image. But he [Graham] is also a good photographer, but in another meaning. He shows his photographs mixed and combined, he does very good editing, but he wants to make a story in the book, but she is more open...

If she goes to China, does she takes pictures like this? Because she has her eyes and the system to take pictures. He also, when he goes to China, would he pick the stereotyped things?

B.L.: I don't know, because I found for him every work is very different, he has done things in Europe, the most recent project he has realized in the United States and every project is very different. I think he thinks a lot about how he is going to approach his projects.

K.M.: He is working very conceptual.

B.L.: Yes, I would say. And this Neudörfl's work I would also call conceptual, because beforehand she prepares herself very well and then she is looking for particular things. And of course she is covering a lot of other things as well

but I think in having an idea of what you're looking for is much easier as you don't get distracted by all these different things that you see. Because if you go to places and you don't have a concept you start just being guided by what there is to see. But when you have a concept you have an idea of what you're looking for, so this concept works together with what there is to see and lets you take different pictures, I think. So this is a rather different way of doing documentary photography, having a concept in mind, going to a place and trying to realize this concept with whatever changes there might be, because you won't know what you might come across beforehand. But still, I think your observations are kind of guided by the concept. And I think with both of them its like that, they have a concept in mind, going to particular places, looking for particular things and then other things happen and they take other pictures as well but in the end they have kind of a more conceptual way of working with the images and not just browsing through the world and looking here and looking there.

Do you think these are interesting perspectives for Japanese people to see?

K.M.: I don't know, I mean, I can't answer. Maybe many Japanese people are interested in seeing photographs about Japan, because we are Japanese, we live in Japan, so from this point, yes, I would think people would be interested to see it. But maybe normal people, people in general who are not so interested in photography or art, maybe they don't find anything from these images here. You know, like ah, this is the station, ah, a girl, ah, nice. You know, for me it's very good [Neudörfl]. But many people when they see these works [Graham] they feel that they can say more about this photography because it's easy to say something, to criticize, to say I like it or I don't like it or oh, this photographer doesn't know Japan or things like that. But maybe many people can't say anything about these photos [Neudörfl].

B.L.: But I think it's the same in Germany, though. I think it's a kind of photography not very many people can enjoy, because they think it's very day-to-day life and not very interesting, they rather enjoy more spectacular things.

K.M.: I don't know if I am right but in Japan we have a history of street photography and so I think many Japanese know this history and this kind of photography like her works. But maybe in Europe you don't have such a history of street photography?

B.L.: Well, I think there are quite a few...

K.M.: So I feel very close, I feel sympathy in her works. Because she did like Japanese photographers have done, taking pictures on the street. But ›Future World‹, I imagine another thing.

B.L.: I think that's intended to have this clash between the title and what you actually see.

K.M.: Maybe it's also interesting to compare this work to street photography of Japanese photographers, you can maybe find the same point of view, the same distance, I think.

B.L.: Yes, I found the distance also in the work of Ed van der Elsken, it's a little bit similar. I mean it is another time and the way he approaches people more than she approaches architecture, but still I think there is a certain way of doing street photography and that is being a little bit distanced.

K.M.: When I am editing the works of the European photographers invited to Japan, maybe I cut this kind of images: kitsch, cute, not anymore, it worries me now. Maybe sometimes the European photographers think that I am very strange but it doesn't make sense now to discuss why Japanese people like things like kitsch objects.

B.L.: I remember one of the photographers, Naomi Tereza Salmon, in the first or second book, she took all these studio photographs of all these little plastic gadgets she discovered.

K.M.: Yes, this is a very interesting concept.

Maybe you can get tired of seeing this kind of images [Graham], but maybe you will never get tired of these images [Neudörfl]. That is why I cut the images of kitsch and cute stuff. You know, I always ask the photographers to bring me, to bring us, images I have never seen before. Don't you think so? Because we have seen so many images from advertisement, TV, books, so I can say, yes, I have seen it before. So I always want to see something new.

B.L.: Yes, I understand.

K.M.: This is one of the duties of the photographers I think. I mean new, not strange or strong, but still new. That's why I'm doing this job. Because I don't have good eyes, I have to ask someone to bring the new things.

B.L.: Yes, but then you edit and put together, so you do have good eyes as well...

I think if you don't feel like saying anything else about the pictures, I just say thank you very much for sharing your time and your opinion.

*Matsumoto Kaoru**Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Matsumoto Kaoru

Das Gespräch mit Matsumoto Kaoru, Kuratorin des Osaka Contemporary Art Space, Osaka, hat am 31. Mai 2006 in Osaka stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

[Matsumoto kennt Grahams Arbeit, Neudörfls nicht.]

Bettina Lockemann: Have you ever noticed photographic works by foreigners and if yes, were they any different to a Japanese point of view?

Matsumoto Kaoru: Of course, the scenery here is part of our everyday life, so there is nothing to discover, usually. But those foreigners pick up some minute details that we looked over or we perceived as being very natural or obvious. But they saw that as something very unique or outstanding about the Japanese culture or the Japanese behavior, so in that sense I sometimes get interested in looking at those photographs. They might have a very unique view that we looked over usually.

B.L.: As the view is kind of different from Japanese, do you think it's more the topics the photographers pick or the way of depiction that is different?

M.K.: Both, I think. I just received a book by some European photographer, I don't remember her name, but she took photographs in Tokyo of the blue tents of the homeless people. And she made a postcard book out of her prints. We would have never thought of that, to make postcards out of these blue sheet houses. It's not beautiful or anything, not even in her works, but it has a unique viewpoint and maybe it is too social and too touchy for us, to pick this subject. But maybe being a foreigner she can really take photographs of them. But for Japanese it might be too serious and too critical socially. So maybe Japanese photographers find it difficult to pick those topics as their subjects.

But also the framing of the photos is different, I think. In Europe you have a canvas of a painting you have kind of a window towards society or towards reality, you always have a kind of structure which lacks from our culture. We have a very different type of painting, like scroll paintings or very narrow traditional Japanese painting, but you have always a very rigid

frame going towards reality. So I always find the European way to set up or cut out the reality very different.

B.L.: Oh, that is very interesting. I have never thought about that before, but it is a good point, I guess. So maybe we start to talk about the book by Paul Graham.

I was wondering about your impression of the book. Do you think it is a very typical or untypical representation of Japan?

M.K.: I have one question: Is there any difference of the engines of Japanese and European cars (vgl. Graham 1995: 2. Toyota Engine #1 (Century), Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 216)?

B.L.: I'm not sure about this. Somebody told me that these are racing cars, but actually I don't know, I don't have any idea about cars... But of course, I guess, the Japanese car industry is very famous, so this is something one might discuss or one might look at.

M.K.: I think this is typical and it's not typical at the same time (vgl. Graham 1995: 34. Hanging Decoration, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 291). By now we have become so used to this kind of images by young Japanese photographers or many famous middle aged photographers like Araki. And they pick up those things in a very casual way, so we can't tell the difference between these European photographs and those taken by Japanese photographers. And now we have the feeling that these things are very interesting even for us as if we have a kind of distance. I know how he perceived this as interesting for him, but in the same way I feel these objects are very interesting for me. So it is kind of detached from our cultural tradition. This is a traditional thing and it should have some meaning, like a symbol or some ritualistic or religious meaning. But we don't know anymore, we have just forgotten about it, so it is only the form that is left. We keep using them without thinking seriously. So sometimes a photographer picks them up and when we see them, I think it is very interesting why we still keep using these forms and symbols. And it helps us to realize to think more. But it's not really by the foreign photographer, even the Japanese photographers pick up these subjects very much these days, so that's why it's not so fresh anymore for me. These viewpoints are so much spread, not only for Japanese culture, but maybe also for European. Many photographers push their shutters very casually and they just pick up some corner of reality. And sometimes that makes us feel kind of fresh or interesting or we see a new discovery. But it is not necessarily only done by foreign artists, Japanese photographers also do that many times now. So I don't see the differences so much any more.

B.L.: Are those differences or similarities you mention found in the single pictures? Because there is very different image material used in this book. It suggests a topic, also with the historical image material and combining Hiroshima and the Yasukuni shrine and the manga-images. So I would like to know more about that, about the combination of those images together, of having an engine and then some woman in the next picture. Maybe you can comment on that.

M.K.: Because we have a very mixed culture, with traditional and modern and contemporary things all together, the images about Japan are so various. If somebody says this is an image of Japan (vgl. Graham 1995: 47. *Rising Sun Painted Backdrop*, Tokyo 1990), I can say, yes but I don't feel any specific point about this photograph. If you pick only the traditional things, like the emperor and Yasukuni shrine, I would say, well, this is not all, we have contemporary things, too. But everything is so mixed. Even if you pick up something randomly, it will probably represent some part of Japan. So I don't see any biased viewpoint in this work. You can pick up a picture from anywhere and make up an image of Japan.

B.L.: So, in this book, do you see a certain topic represented or do you think this is a more general impression of Japan?

M.K.: I think he focused on some very minor details of form, like the women's hairstyles in the pictures of the curls or the working men's glasses. These pictures show some minor details, a formalistic viewpoint in which he presents maybe some aspect of Japanese culture. So the book does not show any kind of big scenery, it is always rather focused on some minute detail. So in that sense it represents some characteristic of Japanese culture. As to be discovered here: (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. *Toy Animal Procession*, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 226).

B.L.: A lot of people have told me that this could be in anyone's home.

M.K.: Do you think this is typical Japanese?

B.L.: I wasn't sure about that, but Japanese people have told me, you can find this in a lot of places.

M.K.: I see.

B.L.: That the photographer does not show any major views, and that he does not show any architecture and no outside views struck me as rather particular. The way he approaches the topic Japan seems to be very particular. Would you agree?

M.K.: Yes, I very much agree. As I said, you always have a kind of frame and trying to symbolize or express some kind of structure inside the frame. And we don't have this kind of structured syntax. He always focuses on some minute details, so in that sense, his approach is in a formalistic way of minor spaces. I really think it represents Japanese culture very much. Rather than showing the big architecture or the big scenery, I feel that these pictures much more represent Japanese culture. If you have some kind of structure, always the European viewpoint is in there. You always have to set up the framework and make some kind of composition. But it's not really part of the culture, I feel, it's always mixed with your viewpoint and the Japanese viewpoint together. But here, you can't say anything, you just take the small part and the photographs itself talks to you about the things and about the details and an outstanding point. So I feel much more familiar to these images rather than the big images of Japan.

B.L.: And I was wondering, as he uses some kind of heavy symbolism and working with image combinations like this (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) which may be kind of shocking for somebody to have this sweet Manga-character and this harsh image of the Hiroshima victim together. Is this combination that strikes you as particular in any way or do you think that even Japanese photographers would use a combination like that?

M.K.: As I said, our culture is a kind of mixture, it is always mixed with tradition and contemporary things. So you see a traditional temple and a very modern contemporary love hotel just standing side by side, that kind of things are always happening. So for me it is not at all shocking, because a lot of things always coexist in Japanese culture. It is my personal opinion but I don't think we Japanese have a specific way to build the history according to specific rules. We always mix everything and we forget everything. There are always many elements coexisting within our society. But I think the European culture really tries to set everything in order and make it kind of official history. But as you know we still have problems with other Asian countries about the World War II. We still can't really make our history in order. It is always a messy situation. But I think we Japanese really like it that way. It's not that we are lazy, but it is our way. We have an expression in Japanese about forgetting. You throw things in the water and the water always cleans everything. It is not really fixed, you know, and meant to put in order. We just throw things in the water and forget them all. We have a very traditional cultural way of thinking, so mixture represents part of this way of thinking, so it's not for me really shocking. It's all part of our life.

B.L.: And what do you think about the representation of women in this work?

M.K.: It's really kind of an 80s fashion. I feel like, yes, it's like we were in the 80s.

B.L.: So you think it is very authentic, as the images were taken between 1989 and 1995?

M.K.: It is kind of typical (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235). But her, maybe she has a practice with some kind of traditional Japanese culture, like Japanese dancing, because this way of using her hands is almost gone. Maybe she is some kind of Maeko from Kyoto as it is a typical way of behavior for traditional women in traditional culture. But many young women don't have that anymore, we just forget or we never received this from our mothers who don't already have this kind of attitude anymore. So that kind of traditional behavior is missing in a sense. But this other women's hairstyle still exists (vgl. Graham 1995: 18. Curl #1, Tokyo 1992).

B.L.: Does it? I have been looking for it, but I could not find it on the Tokyo subway.

M.K.: Well, if you go to the rural part you can still find it. It's typical for Japanese women to hide their teeth, it's a very old tradition (vgl. Graham 1995: 50. Yuki, Tokyo 1992). But not so many women do it anymore. But before to show your white teeth was very impolite, that's why old, old people painted their teeth black.

B.L.: I read about it.

M.K.: So still some women try to hide their mouth when they giggle or when they laugh, but not so many women do that anymore. Maybe you don't notice.

B.L.: My last question about this book would be on the depiction of the males, because I think this is also very particular for me, because in Europe we have the stereotype that the Japanese businessmen all look alike. Now Graham photographs them in a very patterned way, everyone from the same viewpoint. And still I think, having these in this way, then you start to see the little differences in their faces. So I was wondering about what Japanese people think about it.

M.K.: I don't see many things about these male pictures. I don't have any clue. I thought that he was kind of interested in the form of their glasses. I don't see any cultural or social iconography in these photographs. They are not so interesting for me.

B.L.: If there is nothing more to say we might switch to the other one. If you have anything else on mind, please do tell me, though.

M.K.: I don't think it is a typical European view on Japan. Now many Japanese photographers pick up these subjects also (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. Artificial Cherry Blossom, Tokyo 1991; Lockemann 2008: 233). I don't think he is biased or has a typical view. And as Japanese culture is so mixed and you take photos casually maybe you can make up these images without thinking deeply. Our culture is very mixed up indeed.

B.L.: Have you had a chance to page through this book?

M.K.: [blättert] Is this German?

I think this is a really German way of cutting out the scenery. It's like the Bechers', it's a catalogue of the forms.

B.L.: Other than the formal, what is your first impression after looking at it? Do you see any particular topic she is relating to?

M.K.: I think she is focused on the forms and by cutting them out it really conveys some order of the things and structure of the disorder or order of the disorder, something like that. I think it is a very typical German way of cutting out the scenery. The Japanese photographers learn a lot from this kind of setting up the frame so now I really feel familiar to this kind of composition because many contemporary Japanese photographers use this kind of framework.

B.L.: Do you think it is a rather typical or untypical way to represent Japan?

M.K.: I think it's very typical because I had two residential artists from Germany last March, they took those kind of building images and it really looks similar to those images (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 18). So I thought Europeans really are interested in this kind of images.

B.L.: May I ask the names of the photographers?

M.K.: Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber from Düsseldorf. They stayed in Osaka for three months. Oliver took photographs and Katja mainly focused on the videos and she printed photographs out of the video. But they used these kind of building images very much.

B.L.: And what do you think of the portraits?

M.K.: The portraits? I think it's kind of a usual young generation. Rather than Graham's kind of typical 80s image style, she focused on the natural, usual, normal Japanese people, especially young people. Very innocent, don't think seriously about things kind of people.

B.L.: For me the portraits are very special. Because here for the first time I came upon portraits of Asian people and I first saw the person and on the second view I saw that they were Japanese or Asian. A lot of European photographers tend to depict Japanese as always looking alike. For me in this work it was really the first time to see Japanese depicted in a non-stereotypic way.

M.K.: For me it's very natural, there is nothing biased about them.

B.L.: When you say that it's very natural, do you think this is a perspective that could be also be taken by someone Japanese?

M.K.: Yes, I think so.

B.L.: This concerns not only the portraits but also the architecture.

M.K.: Yes, I think so. But for us this architecture is so familiar there is nothing interesting to take these photographs anymore (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 17). So I don't think many Japanese photographers pick up these subjects, rather the houses in the suburbs or the very new towns, those images are very interesting for them. But not this kind of typical skyscrapers in the center of the city because so many pictures have been taken and we are so used to these images it is not so interesting anymore, we can't add anything interesting to it.

B.L.: As the other pictures I have seen of Japan are usually about the crazy postmodern Japanese architecture, those forms you would not encounter in Europe or America. So I had the impression that a lot of European photographers would concentrate on that kind of architecture. And for me this is a regular city center skyscraper photograph and it doesn't have

anything special to it. And I think this is the way it is intended, to show the normal scenery of having urban centers, of course.

M.K.: I see.

B.L.: My impression of her work was that she has this everyday kind of approach and that she is not looking for the really striking things but for the everyday things Japanese people live with.

M.K.: Yes, I think so, too. But still she is trying to insert some very minute delicate cultural aspects, that is why I really like her photos. You can really look to find some typical, not typical but some kind of Japanese cultural aspects. I like that. I could say that this is a very natural view, but others might say this is typical for Japanese women, always being together (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 9; Lockemann 2008: 276). But it's not so obvious from her viewpoint. Maybe she thought this is a nice composition it is not a very intentional viewpoint about this photograph. So I really like her approach. Trying to take a balance between the foreigner and the photographer looking at the scenery in a kind of neutral way. Not neutral but in a kind of objective way. I think she tried to take a balance of that. So I really like her approach.

B.L.: And I was wondering if either one of the books, do they show a perspective on Japan or Japanese society that would be interesting for Japanese people to look at?

M.K.: I think we need both, or many of these viewpoints. Japan has to be looked on from many different angles, I think. Graham focuses on very minute details and Neudörfl uses more a European way of cutting out the scenery. I think we need those different kind of angles. Especially as our culture is so mixed up, so many phases and elements all together, that's why we need different angles and viewpoints to feel the reality of it.

I really like this picture (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 4; Lockemann 2008: 255). You know that we plant cedar trees on the mountains intentionally since the 1950s/60s, because the cedar tree is very easy to plant and it grows fast to make it use as a material for anything. So almost all the Japanese mountains are covered with cedar trees. That's why we now have problems with the hay-fever. Maybe it's not typical but we have a typical kind of cedar-tree-mountain. And also here is a kind of tension of the tape and it is so carefully pasted. So I feel a very Japanese way of handling the objects in order and tension and everything. So I really like this picture. [Lower part] This is kind of the micro way [upper part] and this is the macro way. But you have the same attitude in both parts.

B.L.: That's very interesting. [...]

M.K.: I was really surprised that it was for you the first time to see this kind of normal portraits of Japanese people.

B.L.: In the 90s a lot of European photographers went to Japan and I always had the impression that it is kind of a fashion and stereotypical way of seeing Japanese people and they wouldn't take pictures of normal people. The first

thing I notice being here, was, riding on the subway to the office every morning, that I could not understand how anybody could come up with the idea that all Japanese look alike. Because I think that they look just as different from each other as Europeans do. Except for maybe that they have the same hair-color. Other than that I see so many different types so I don't know how the stereotype could develop. And that is basically what has been transported by photographers as well.

M.K.: I see. That's very interesting.

B.L.: Also, in Europe Araki is very famous and I don't really like the way he pictures women but it is not that they would be shown in any natural way. So I thought this is just some normal people in a situation where they are talking to somebody else and not really looking into the camera. So I did really think this was very special.

M.K.: I am very surprised to hear that. [...]

If Grahams photos are the only resources of the Japanese images then I think it's a big problem. It's true that we have these kinds of aspects in our everyday life. So we are exposed to the strong traditional stereotyped images too, we are kind of facing these traditional aspects. We use this typical or traditional culture sometimes ourselves, we pick it up. I don't say this is all biased or typical. Of course it is typical, but so many things are coexisting. Even a Japanese photographer could take these pictures, too and produce this kind of book, I am sure. But I didn't know that the Europeans have a really biased image.

But why does she say its *Future world*?

B.L.: I think it's a kind of word play with words because in Europe we expect Japan to be very much advanced technologically. We always think of Japan as being kind of futuristic. [...]

I think it is kind of a game, that you expect something futuristic, but it's not really there...

M.K.: I understand.

How could you imagine to ski in this environment (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 37; Lockemann 2008: 273).

B.L.: And she said, when she visited this place it was about 35°C outside...

M.K.: It's part of our culture. We are trying to construct and create things that are really comfortable for life or for entertainment. Even building these huge constructions, you still want to enjoy skiing in the middle of summer. I think it represents part of our culture. But she tells us in a very delicate way. Not really telling, but she picks up the scene, which tells you something, but she is not really speaking out. It is very minute and delicate. You have to find out what she found in that scene.

B.L.: Yes, it's very subtle. And when I talked to her she said, that one aspect she was looking for in her conceptual documentary photography on Japan, were aspects of security in Japanese society...

M.K.: Security?

B.L.: Yes, because that is something a foreigner strikes right away, that everybody will try to make you feel safe. But it's not only related to earthquakes or really dangerous situations like that, but also in miniature details that you encounter every day. Like when you ride an escalator in a department store and a soft voice tells you to remind to step off on time. And things like this are always there... And I think one can find this in many of these pictures. Like for example here in this picture: (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 36; Lockemann 2008: 269) that people like to travel in a group so they don't get lost. But I think it is not pointed out explicitly and it is really subtle. You might or might not see it while browsing through the book.

M.K.: Right. You know there are many theme parks in various parts of Japan like Holland [*Huis Ten Bosch*, Kyushu] and some other European countries. And they really create some miniature foreign cities. And some foreign writers say that foreign countries are just too exotic for Japanese people, that's why they create miniatures that the Japanese can enjoy the foreign atmosphere, because the real thing is just too exotic for Japanese. So I think the Japanese culture is always trying to cover up the surface so we don't really have to touch the reality. We always wrap and cover and make a minute creation for everything so that we try not to have a direct contact with the core of the reality. I think this is really part of our culture.

B.L.: Ok, that is very interesting.

M.K.: Grahams images are very exotic for me, too, and it is very enjoyable to look at them. It's so 80s and the 80s are so far away for me so now I can enjoy, no matter if they are taken by a European or a Japanese photographer. The 80s are so far away and so exotic.

So now she is living where?

B.L.: In Berlin.

M.K.: And why is it also published in Japanese?

B.L.: She wanted to make it usable in both ways, the Western and the Japanese way. You can page through in both ways.

M.K.: I see. But it was published in Germany.

*B.L.: Yes, and it has never been shown in Japan.
Thank you very much for the interview.*

**Oshima Naruki***Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Oshima Naruki

Das Gespräch mit Oshima Naruki, Fotograf und Dozent an der Kyoto Saga University of Arts hat in Kyoto am 2. Juni 2006 stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Bettina Lockemann: Do you know any of these books?

Oshima Naruki: No.

B.L.: Before talking about the books I would like to know if you have ever noticed interesting photographs by Europeans or Westerners that have been dealing with Japan. And if yes why you found the interesting.

O.N.: European photography about Japan?

B.L.: Yes.

O.N.: Basically I feel, that the European view on Japan is depending upon colonialism. It is the same view as for other areas in the world, for example Africa and South America or Asia. It is the same viewpoint that maybe the other world is different from European culture. I feel that the Europeans look down to other and different cultures. I fundamentally feel that colonialism. But in contemporary documentary art photography maybe there is a little difference in the viewpoint. After paging through they seem to be taking pictures of our daily life, but they show a part of our daily life that we don't notice or we are unconscious of.

B.L.: So there is a difference between Europeans looking at Japan and Japanese looking at Japan?

O.N.: Yes.

B.L.: And do you think this difference is related to the topics the photographers choose or is it related to the way they frame the pictures, the way they use the images and the way they conceive the images?

O.N.: This is a difficult question. Probably when we travel to other areas, we Japanese, maybe we might have the same viewpoint to other cultures. Maybe the way of taking a picture might not be different between Europeans and Japanese.

B.L.: Do you think it is interesting to see an outside view on Japan, a view from Europeans, is it interesting to see a different perspective?

O.N.: That depends on the pictures. I am interested in some pictures but on the other hand I don't like pictures depending on colonialism. Basically, I don't know the documentary photography context very well, I have never been thinking about how Europeans see Japanese culture.

B.L.: Maybe we can start to talk about Paul Graham's book first. I would like to know about your first impression, what you think and what is your feeling about this book.

O.N.: The pictures remind me of the age of the bubble economy. During bubble economy the strange culture appeared. I had a strange feeling towards the culture, I didn't like it, that all pictures are really strange, or kitsch for me. That's a part of Japanese culture. Maybe the photographer got interested in the kitsch part of Japanese culture. I feel the reality of this photograph has been made by the photographer (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. Artificial Cherry Blossom, Tokyo 1991; Lockemann 2008: 233). But we have been thinking about our culture from images made by European people a long time ago. Maybe he presents these images and maybe we start to think about our culture again from these images. That we have a kitsch part of our own culture. I think it is right or wrong that we think about our culture by the view of European people.

B.L.: You think that's okay?

O.N.: Yes. Maybe we think of our culture between European and Japanese traditional culture. Maybe it has been difficult for us to identify our own culture or ourselves. That is, I believe, our style in our culture.

B.L.: So do you think this is a typical or untypical representation of Japan?

O.N.: I think untypical, not typical images. Maybe it shows one typical side of Japanese culture. There are many elements of Japanese culture and these images show one side of it, I think. But we don't notice this part, we see these pictures we start to think about our culture from this work.

Do you know Noboyushi Araki? I feel that this book is similar to his work. That is the underground of Japanese culture, I feel. Maybe this woman is hostess in a bar (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235).

B.L.: Somebody told me she is a television presenter in the Osaka area.

O.N.: Really?

B.L.: Do you see a certain topic he deals with in his work? Can you tell which part of Japanese culture he is relating to or is it difficult to give an opinion about a special topic? Or is it a more general view.

O.N.: Yes, it is definitely a general view, but it reminds me of bubble economy, like the hairstyle of the women.

B.L.: And do you think this is an interesting approach to show Japanese culture? The way he does the editing and the way he takes the pictures?

O.N.: Basically I like this book. But I don't like that this book represents Japanese culture. But he abstracts one of the essentials of Japanese culture and that is kitsch and high technology and the underground images. It goes back and forth between these aspects.

Why are you interested in the European view on Japan?

B.L.: [Erklärung]

O.N.: I think that the deep gap [the gap between tradition and contemporary life that is often stressed within European representations of Japan] is natural for Japanese. That is our daily life.

Why did he take pictures from the side of the faces?

B.L.: [Erklärung]

O.N.: Is this wallpaper (vgl. Graham 1995: 47. Rising Sun Painted Backdrop, Tokyo 1990)?

B.L.: Yes.

O.N.: But there is such a kind of wallpaper in Europe too!

B.L.: I was wondering, what you think about the combination of historical imagery with contemporary imagery?

O.N.: First of all, I have never looked at this kind of picture (vgl. Graham 1995: 48. Hirohito and Imperial Army Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 229). We rarely have the opportunity to see this kind of photography concerning the Japanese army. Maybe he took this picture in Yasukuni shrine? I feel surprised to see this picture after the other very different pictures. But I think the photographer treats this picture on the same level as other pictures. And I agree, that is one more picture of Japanese culture. But maybe as I said before, we don't have the opportunity of seeing these kinds of pictures. I am interested in this picture.

I think maybe this photographer represents the deep gap among comic or people and the crime of a war in Japan. I think other countries also have a kind of gap, do you know what I mean?

B.L.: I'm not sure. I was thinking that Japan still has problems resulting from the war with their Asian neighbors. And somebody told me this is Yasukuni shrine and this is an issue that comes up every year on the news media and in

Europe we hear about it, too. Supposedly, Japan has not really dealt with the war crimes and its responsibility it has to take. Were you talking about this gap, that the Japanese people or Japan haven't really faced this problem?

O.N.: No. Every country has a kind of gap inside its own culture. And those photographs represent that we have a kind of gap between kitsch and serious culture and high technology and war crime. But I am wondering why the photography of European people deals with the special side of Japanese culture, the gap of Japanese culture. As I said, every country has a kind of gap.

B.L.: Okay.

O.N.: Maybe it is difficult to explain what I think.

B.L.: I would like to know what you think of this image combination (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222)?

O.N.: I think this is a printing matter and that is a printing matter. That the meaning of the pictures is quite different but the printing matter is the same level. And that is a sign that I see. Because here you can see the printing grid pattern.

B.L.: And what do you think about the depiction of the women? They are always frozen in a gesture. What do you think of how they are represented in this book or in these photographs?

O.N.: This is normal for me. Is it not normal in Europe?

B.L.: Of course, people do things with their hands, but some seem to be very Japanese. And then it is rather strange to have a photograph of this, as in portraying people you would normally choose a photograph where she is not having her hand in her face.

O.N.: Probably they are shy... This behavior is normal for me.

This image is related to the war (vgl. Graham 1995: 46. Atomic Cloud Photographic Backdrop, Hiroshima 1990)?

B.L.: I think it is an image from above, maybe before they dropped the bomb or something...

O.N.: Are there explanations of the images?

B.L.: Just the short captions in the back and an interview with the artist on the pink sheet of paper in the book.

If you feel like commenting on anything else, please do.

O.N.: The photographer gathered the images in this book depending on his idea or the European stereotyped idea for Japanese. He takes the pictures following his idea of Japan or the Japanese. The idea might be rooted in

colonialism. I wonder why the photographer combines general people or daily life with elements of war. He tried to construct a deep gap within the book. I am wondering if the gap is normal for me or for us, otherwise we might not have the gap or might not feel it but the photographer will try to see a gap. It's the view of the artist. He wants to see the gap.

B.L.: If there is nothing else you would like to say about this book, then we should look at the other one.

O.N.: I prefer this book. [Neudörfl]

B.L.: Maybe you can tell me your first impression of this one?

O.N.: It is difficult. I see abstract things. I think this photography itself is interesting. The motif of the photography is just Japanese culture. These images show my daily life. I feel strange about this work. Maybe the interesting point of this photography is that it does not show the outstanding points [specialty] of Japanese culture.

B.L.: Do you have the impression that this is an outside view? Or is it a view a Japanese photographer could come up with, too?

O.N.: Difficult question. I don't feel there is a kind of strategy showing Japan. It is very natural. I like this book. A Japanese photographer may be able to take the same pictures, but I don't know. Maybe the viewpoint of Japanese and Europeans is a little bit different. I feel a little difference between them, but I cannot say what is the difference.

These photographs show our daily life aspects but I feel kind of a strange that these images are taken from the other side (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 49). But I think the viewpoint of the landscape is a little bit similar to Takashi Homma.

B.L.: So what do you think about the portraits in the book?

O.N.: I can't see why the portraits are inserted among the landscape images. Maybe there is a subject the photographer wants to enhance by inserting them. The way of taking pictures of Japanese or Asians... These images remind me of Thomas Struth's portraits. Basically this portrait is normal, I don't feel strange. The photographer took natural pictures of Japanese faces. This is my impression.

B.L.: That was my impression as well. I think they are very natural.

O.N.: This is quite typical of snapshot-photography (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 53).

B.L.: And what do you think about the different images, I mean she includes landscape, city images, she has the portraits and also the resorts like the artificial beach and the skiing arena. Is it natural or is it strange to have these different things together?

O.N.: That is strange for me. Basically I see this is a natural view, but she points out some strange side of our culture. The artificial pool is funny for us, but it is also normal, maybe she is unconscious of seeing this special side. But this is also funny (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 29; Lockemann 2008: 268). Probably this work will bring us to her viewpoint. I feel a fresh feeling for our culture or our daily life.

B.L.: Is it because she points out certain things that you haven't been aware of?

O.N.: Yes. Basically we normally see this site or this place but I have a different viewpoint for the place. I think this is a different idea. For European people this landscape seems to be strange?

B.L.: Well, I think, when Europeans see images of Japan they expect certain things and they don't find them in here so they may be disappointed. This kind of photography is a little difficult to understand for many people as it is so every-day like that people don't understand why she took certain pictures at all. They don't see anything special in it. I think she shows many things about Japan but not those anyone who is coming to Japan for just three days will notice right away.

Do you think those are photographic works that would be interesting for Japanese people to look at? They have never been shown in Japan and I was wondering if they might be interesting for a Japanese audience.

O.N.: How should I say? Those works give me different viewpoints on our culture. But I think for me these books are different. I prefer Neudörfl's. In this book I feel, Graham has a kind of strategy of editing photography that I don't like. It is rooting in colonialism and he is looking down on our culture. Neudörfl's book is very natural but it gives a new viewpoint on our culture. I prefer this one [Neudörfl]. But some pictures in Grahams book are interesting for me. I just don't like the editing. That's all.

B.L.: Thank you very much for the interview.

*Saiga Yuji**Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Saiga Yuji

Das Gespräch mit Saiga Yuji, Fotograf und Dozent am Tokyo College of Photography (Tokyo Sogo Shashin Senmon Gakko) hat im Rahmen eines Seminars mit fünf Studenten am 25. Juni 2006 in Tokyo stattgefunden. Das Gespräch wurde auf Japanisch geführt und vom Studenten Hinohara Yuta übersetzt. Bei dem vorliegenden Protokoll handelt es sich um eine Übertragung meiner Gesprächsnotizen. Es gibt keine Videoaufzeichnung.

Alle schauen sich zunächst die Bücher an, Saiga kennt *Future World*, weil er vor zwei Wochen Elisabeth Neudörfl in Berlin getroffen hat. Weil alle sehr interessante Sachen sagen, habe ich davon Abstand genommen, das Gespräch mit Fragen zu lenken. Zudem ist es sprachlich nicht immer ganz leicht, denn Hinohara muss übersetzen und findet auch nicht immer die richtigen Ausdrücke.

Student 1: Ich habe den Eindruck, dass Ausländer einen anderen Blick auf Japan zeigen. Neudörfls Fotografien zeigen Japan, wie es wirklich ist. Die meisten Japaner können solche Bilder nicht machen. Japanische Fotografen schauen nicht so auf Japan oder verbinden ein anderes Gefühl mit Japan. Japaner haben andere, stereotype Vorstellungen von Japan, die Neudörfl so nicht hat. Für Japaner ist diese Fotografie deshalb überraschend, weil sie es gar nicht gewohnt sind, Japan so zu sehen. Neudörfl hat kein spezifisches Japanbild, deshalb zeigen ihre Fotografien ein »nacktes Japan«.

Student 2: Die Close-Ups von Graham vermitteln in ihrer Vorliebe für Details eine Atmosphäre, die Japan entspricht. Neudörfl hingegen zeigt einen weiteren Blick. Neudörfl interessiert sich für Beton, Highways, gebaute Strukturen und merkwürdige Blicke. Das sage ich so, weil ich vom Land komme und zum Beispiel die hochgestellten Autobahnen für mich immer noch etwas Besonderes darstellen. Ich würde sie nur viel prominenter ins Bild rücken, während Neudörfl sie eher so nebenbei einfließen lässt. Das finde ich ungewöhnlich.

Student 3: Neudörfls Fotografien vermitteln mir ein sehr unbehagliches Gefühl, weil der Raum so voll gepackt ist. Es ist ein bisschen klaustrophobisch, weil die Fotografien Druck erzeugen, sogar die Landschaftsaufnahmen und die Porträts. Die Porträts zeigen ganz natürliche Menschen, aber ihre Gesichter zeigen keinen Ausdruck. Vielleicht hat die Fotografin gedacht, Japa-

ner zeigen keine Gefühle oder keinen Ausdruck in ihrer Mimik. Graham zeigt Japan wie es ist, finde ich.

Student 4: Mein Eindruck ist, dass Neudörfls Fotografien eine Geschichte erzählen und darauf ausgerichtet sind, Leuten, die Japan nicht kennen, Japan zu zeigen. Sie zeigt einen weiten Blick über Städte und vermittelt einen japanischen Alltag. Graham benutzt Motive, die einem Ausländer, der nach Japan kommt, sofort ins Auge fallen müssen. Ansonsten stimme ich weitgehend mit meinen Kommilitonen überein.

Student 5: Bei Graham sind die Details ganz wichtig, er fokussiert immer kleine Ausschnitte. Ich verbinde mit dem Buch ganz stark den Schwerpunkt Krieg. Neudörfls Fotografien vermitteln einen sehr frischen und so noch nicht gesehenen Eindruck. Die Fotografin hat gar nicht so viel über Japan nachgedacht, sondern das Normale gesehen. Dadurch kann sie ein sehr natürliches Japan zeigen.

Student 1: Bei Graham kann ich auch den Einfluss des Themas Krieg deutlich sehen.

Saiga Yuji: Beide Bücher zeigen sehr unterschiedliche Blickweisen. Neudörfl schaut auf die Oberfläche, Graham sieht sehr viel tiefer. Beide Fotografen beschäftigen sich mit dem gleichen zeitgenössischen Japan, aber sie sehen sehr unterschiedlich. Neudörfls Arbeit ist sehr entspannt, sehr zurückhaltend. Es ist fast ein bisschen wie in einem Traum. [Ich bin nicht sicher, aber vielleicht meinte er auch ein bisschen so etwas wie eine traumwandlerische Sicherheit zu sehen, Japan zu zeigen, wie es ist.] Neudörfl zeigt alltägliche Dinge und einen alltäglichen Blick und drückt auf sehr natürliche Weise aus, wie Japan wirklich ist. Solche Bilder könnte ich nicht machen und ich denke, japanische Fotografen könnten allgemein nicht so fotografieren, weil wir so nicht sehen. Neudörfl fotografiert Dinge, die Japaner nicht anschauen. Japaner müssten auch so sehen können, sie haben diese Fähigkeit aber verloren, weil das einfach zu alltäglich ist. Neudörfl hat am Anfang vielleicht auch die Dinge gesehen, die Graham fotografiert, hat das dann aber überwunden und einen anderen Blick entwickelt, um ihre zurückhaltend beobachtenden Fotos zu machen. Das ist ein Element wahrhaft großer Arbeiten. Die weiche Tonalität von Neudörfls Bildern korrespondiert sehr gut mit ihrer zurückhaltenden und entspannten Art zu fotografieren. Die Welt, die Neudörfl fotografiert, ist so alltäglich, dass der Titel *Future World* zu sagen scheint, dass es auch in der Zukunft so weitergehen wird. Die Arbeit vermittelt, dass es wenig aufregende Dinge gibt im Leben. Der Begriff ›Future World‹ ist abstrakt und eher weich, was sehr gut zu den Fotografien passt.

Graham schaut weit unter die Oberfläche. Er hat ein Anliegen und vermittelt seinen Standpunkt, indem er sehr genau hinschaut. Graham erforscht die Details. Grahams Blick möchte ich den Vincent-van-Gogh-Blick nennen, weil er Situationen erklärt. Er zeigt Situationen, die man wiedererkennen kann und zeigt damit die Realität Japans. Er hat wirklich nach Japanischem gesucht. Ausländer, die Japan nicht kennen, können es auf jeden Fall in Grahams Bildern sehen. Graham fotografiert Sachen, die ihn überraschen, aber er fotografiert sie nach japanischem Geschmack. Man sieht, dass er das wollte und es ist ihm gelungen. Moriyama Daido und Araki machen vergleichbare

Bilder, deshalb ist eine solche Sichtweise für Japaner nicht so überraschend. Zum Beispiel erinnert die Doppelseite mit den Fotografien 15/16 stark an A-raki (vgl. Graham 1995: 15. Mariko, Tokyo 1989/ 16. Rie, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 237). Graham bezieht aber Japan gegenüber auch eine kritische Haltung. Jedes einzelne Foto ist sehr stark wie auch die ganze Arbeit sehr stark ist, aber es gibt kaum Überraschungseffekte. Seine Bilder scheinen zu sagen: »schaut euch all diese aufregenden Dinge an!« *Empty Heaven* ist ein starker Titel für starke, aussagekräftige Bilder. Graham gelingt es, eine intensive Atmosphäre zu vermitteln. Das ähnelt einer japanischen Fotografie, denn auch japanische Fotografen sind gut darin, intensive Atmosphären zu erzeugen.

Besonders Grahams Porträts zeugen von einem bestimmten Japanbild. Seine Porträts erzählen Geschichten und zeigen Gefühle, man könnte sie als »nass« bezeichnen, während Neudörfls Porträts gar nichts erzählen, deshalb sind sie eher »trocken«. Neudörfl wollte etwas über Japaner erfahren und hat sich die Gesichter sehr genau angeschaut. Bei Graham würde ein Porträt reichen, um viel über Japaner zu erzählen. Neudörfl braucht dazu auf jeden Fall mehr als ein Bild.

Ausländer würden vermutlich Grahams Buch bevorzugen, weil es mehr spezifisch Japanisches zeigt. Auch für Japaner ist Grahams Buch vermutlich einfacher zu verstehen als Neudörfls, wobei ich das vor allem auf ein allgemeines Publikum beziehen möchte und nicht auf diejenigen, die ausgebildet sind, sich mit Fotografien zu beschäftigen.

Neudörfls Arbeit ist vielleicht von der Becherschule und August Sander beeinflusst. Deutsche Fotografen arbeiten oft sehr konzeptorientiert, sie zeigen Gefühle und Atmosphäre. Aussagekräftige Bilder und starke Konzepte findet man z.B. bei Gerhard Richter.

Bettina Lockemann: Welche Bedeutung hat das historische Bildmaterial bei Graham?

Die Studierenden sehen dessen Verwendung nicht als Kritik an Japan, sie haben eher den Eindruck, dass die Geschichte und die Gegenwart irgendwie zusammen gehören.

Saiga: Ich denke, das ist durchaus kritisch gemeint. Aber die Studierenden verbinden keine besonderen Gefühle mit der Vergangenheit, weil sie nichts über den 2. Weltkrieg wissen, sie lernen darüber nichts in der Schule. Und Amerika ist so wichtig im zeitgenössischen Japan. Es gibt überall amerikanische Produkte und sogar die Politik verehrt Amerika, so dass es keine negativen Gefühle gegenüber den USA mehr gibt. Wie sollen die jungen Menschen dann wissen, dass es mal anders war, wenn das nicht in der Schule unterrichtet wird? Eigentlich müssten sie historisches Wissen dringend vermittelt bekommen. Aber die Regierung übt eine Art Bewusstseinskontrolle aus. Am 15. August gedenken wir des Kriegsendes, aber nirgends werden Niederlage oder Kapitulation erwähnt. Das ist überhaupt nicht gut. Es vermittelt die Möglichkeit, sich einfach gar nicht mit dem Krieg auseinanderzusetzen. Weil Neudörfl jünger ist als Graham, hat dieses Thema vielleicht einen geringeren Einfluss auf ihre Arbeit.

Eigentlich gibt es ja viele Parallelen zwischen Deutschland und Japan in Bezug auf den verlorenen Krieg, aber der Umgang damit ist doch sehr unter-

schiedlich. Japan sieht sich wegen der Atombomben immer auf der Seite der Opfer und nicht als Aggressor und Kriegsverbrecher. Deshalb gibt es hier überhaupt keinen Ansatz, sich mit dieser Seite der Vergangenheit zu beschäftigen. In Berlin sagen japanische Touristen, wenn sie die Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche ansehen wollen, sie besuchen den »Genbaku-Domu« (Atom-Dom: so heißt ein als Mahnmal zerstört gelassenes Haus im Zentrum von Hiroshima). Das ist doch verrückt, aber für sie ist es das gleiche.

*Yoshihara Mieko**Foto: Bettina Lockemann*

Gespräch mit Yoshihara Mieko

Das Gespräch mit Yoshihara Mieko, Kuratorin des Tokushima Modern Art Museum, Tokushima, hat am 29. Mai 2006 in Tokushima stattgefunden. Die vorliegende Übertragung des Gesprächs in die Schriftform orientiert sich am Gesprochenen, versucht jedoch, sprachliche Unebenheiten zu glätten und Missverständnisse zu vermeiden.

Bettina Lockemann: Have you ever come across European photography that you have found particularly striking or that displayed a special view on Japan that you had not seen before?

Yoshihara Mieko: This place is a little bit special because we have some famous photographers born in Tokushima. So that is the reason why it is a little bit difficult for our museum to have photography exhibitions because many photographers have their opinions and for the museum this is very confusing. So to talk about photographs is a little bit difficult situation here in Tokushima. But I showed a temporary exhibition from Germany and some other foreign countries and of course some photographers showed their works on Japan on the exhibitions. So at that time I can feel about the eyes from foreign countries on themselves and on other peoples. For example, German photographers are very severe and very clear for me, but most people cannot judge if these photographs are useful for our age and our society and our mind or not because nowadays the camera is a very usual thing and people can take photos very easily. But in Tokushima for example, they cannot see the artistic or the historical value of the photographs. So maybe I think they need some experience to see more things. So if you ask the people in Tokushima how do you think about this photograph, mostly people cannot say anything I think, because they don't have the experience to see photography. For me, many European photographers have their stereotype on Japan, I agree with you.

B.L.: Do you think, when Europeans depict Japan, their view differs from Japanese photographers?

Y.M.: In my opinion, the Europeans know the long cultural history of our country therefore they like traditional things. They know old paintings and woodblock prints. So this is one of the reasons for the stereotyped view on our culture, I think.

B.L.: So you think foreign photographers tend to show stereotyped images, like Japanese traditional things?

Y.M.: Yes.

B.L.: Do you think that European photographers choose other topics than Japanese photographers? That Japanese photographers are more concerned with their lives or political things and that foreigners choose a broader picture and want to show Japan in general?

Y.M.: I don't think so, because this [Graham] is an expression of our social issue. For example, for us Japanese this picture (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235) is a little bit strange, that's okay for this type of picture we can think about our cultural issues and our daily problems.

B.L.: As you don't know this book, maybe you look at the book first and afterwards we can talk about it. While you are looking at the book and you want to talk about certain things that come to your mind that is perfect, too.

Y.M.: We can see this type of woman in women's magazines, for me it is a little bit funny (vgl. Graham 1995: 6. Girl with White Face, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 235). When I travel to other countries, I experience Japanese women. Mostly people ask me are you Vietnamese or from the Philippines, because they judge from the makeup and the clothes. They cannot judge Japanese women, because they judge from makeup and clothes. As I don't mind about that, people judge me wrong. Now I remember that experience from this picture.

Miscommunication makes a typical image of Japanese women and many women just want to be like that: pretty, cute, beautiful, clean. Nowadays it has a little bit changed, though.

And of course, this is a very famous character (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222). Do you know?

B.L.: No...

Y.M.: Sari-chun. For my age (45) this is a very famous character. But maybe for people in their 30s they don't know about this character.

B.L.: So this is an older manga-character?

Y.M.: Yes, in my elementary-school days I saw her on TV. Every Wednesday or so...

Maybe this is an X-Ray photograph after a traffic accident or some sad event (vgl. Graham 1995: 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222) ...

B.L.: It's from Hiroshima. It is a kimono pattern that burned into the skin of this woman.

Y.M.: Fake. But this is a genuine dried flower (vgl. Graham 1995: 9. Artificial Roses in Bell Jar, Tokyo 1995). It is a highly technical way how they dry them and keep the intense color. So it is a little bit strange.

A frame in the dark. A shrine image (vgl. Graham 1995: 10. State Shinto Procession Painting, Tokyo 1990). Uncomfortable.

At home we can see many of these mascots (vgl. Graham 1995: 11. Toy Animal Procession, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 226). If people buy this type of thing [baby products] they can get mascots with them.

These are typical Japanese women with their makeup, but a little bit older times.

This trademark is very famous and I guess the engine photographs are about our industrial products (vgl. Graham 1995: 2. Toyota Engine #1 (Century), Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 216).

You know, Thomas Ruff's portraits are very strong, because of the frontality of the photographs. We can see, but they also look back at the visitors. Graham's portraits are a little bit sweet, not so strong, not so straight. This fuzzy feeling is the character of Japanese persons.

Do you know this (vgl. Graham 1995: 18. Curl #1, Tokyo 1992)?

B.L.: I haven't seen any of these hair-styles, it must have been a fashion about 10 years ago.

Y.M.: Yes! I remember that, I can imagine it is not contemporary nowadays. It is a little bit strange, I don't think this is a Japanese woman (vgl. Graham 1995: 20. Yuko, Tokyo 1992). Chinese, maybe?

Unnatural, I think. Japanese people are very good in making fake things like this, I think (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. Artificial Cherry Blossom, Tokyo 1991; Lockemann 2008: 233). At the restaurants you can see very beautiful fake foods.

Japanese business person (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man #1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 259).

Cars are very famous products of our country. I can feel the same thing about photographs of Thomas Ruff and Struth, because their prints are very beautiful just like this. Very sharp, they have a very high level printing technique. We can see that their technical background in the contemporary photographs. Compared to that we have prints from Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger that are very thin. Compared with American photographs European photographs have a very high quality. These engines make me think about that.

What is this (vgl. Graham 1995: 29. Surrender Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 227)?

B.L.: It is a photograph from the Japanese surrender on August 15th 1945. He took that in a museum or gallery, I suppose.

Y.M.: Ah...? I think this is very old.

B.L.: It is like the painting of the shrine, he used some material that he found in museums on display.

Y.M.: Ah...

I think these two are a bit different (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. Artificial Cherry Blossom, Tokyo 1991/ 34. Hanging Decoration, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 233; 291). This is for the street, for the shops. If there is an event, they hang this in front of their shop.

B.L.: When there is a matsuri?

Y.M.: Yes, or on New Year's day. We have this type of rice ball, red and white. As you know, red and white is a very nice color combination in our culture. We use it to use it this type of rice cake flour on a branch in this way. And hang it in the house. Because they can call the happiness of the year. This is very nice. Of course, this is fake, not a genuine rice ball. This is for a market or in the street. But this is okay (vgl. Graham 1995: 21. Artificial Cherry Blossom, Tokyo 1991; Lockemann 2008: 233). For what people make this, I don't know, but I can understand this (vgl. Graham 1995: 34. Hanging Decoration, Tokyo 1992; Lockemann 2008: 291).

He mentions Hiroshima on various occasions.

The camera eye is from the side (vgl. Graham 1995: 22. Man #1, Kasumigaseki, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 259). This is a little bit strange for me. Many people say that Japanese people don't want to see straight, to say straight, to do straight, maybe that is a way for the photographer to show that. And they all have glasses, which is typical Japanese, I think.

Of course you know, this is very symbolic, it is the symbol of our emperor's family (vgl. Graham 1995: 48. Hirohito and Imperial Army Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 229). Very symbolic.

B.L.: And I think the emperor is actually standing there, but the flashlight has taken him out of the picture.

Y.M.: Yes, yes...

This is a thing with no use, I think (vgl. Graham 1995: 49. Rainbow Sugar, Tokyo 1995; Lockemann 2008: 231).

Ah, from Hiroshima (vgl. Graham 1995: 51. Preserved Keloid (Radiation) Scars, Hiroshima 1990).

There is not so much space for green in Japan (vgl. Graham 1995: 54. Roots in Bottle, Tokyo 1992) ...

Maybe in Hiroshima (vgl. Graham 1995: 55. Concrete Sun, Tokyo 1992?)

B.L.: I think its in Tokyo.

After seeing the book do you understand the topic and how do you think the photographer is relating to Japan in the images.

Y.M.: After the World War the Japanese people are a very industrious people I think so one point is the industrial production. I think this is one point of view of the photographs. In this age, females can wear very colorful clothes and various makeup, whereas men still wear the regular business clothes and are very straight. And with their glasses they see something I don't know, we don't know. Maybe they think about their job and not their family, that is my impression.

I think, nowadays it is very difficult for young Japanese people to live with power and hope and such things. We can see here images of middle-

aged men and young women. In our society, women like to buy many things, makeup, phones... We don't have a very strong image of young men in our contemporary days. The images of trees... In Hiroshima there were no flowers and trees after the bomb, but in the next summer there were these pretty red flowers (kyotchikoto). So now the flower is the symbol of the city, a symbolic flower. I am thinking about that on seeing the trees. [...]

B.L.: Paul Graham depicts young women, he picks images from the past and he always comes very close. I think this is a very special way to show Japan. And I would like to know, as you said that there are a lot of typical things that he chose, if you think that he is showing a stereotyped view on Japan or if you think that even though he is using stereotypical things it is not as stereotyped as other depictions of Japan. Do you think it is stereotyped or is it very different?

Y.M.: I think he is very close to Japanese culture and history. I don't think this is very stereotyped. He is very close, I think very clever.

B.L.: Do you like the pictures and the way he depicts Japan?

Y.M.: Not bad, yes.

B.L.: And what do you think of image combinations like this one (vgl. Graham 1995: 7. Candy Wrapper, Tokyo 1990/ 8. Kimono Pattern Flash Burn Photograph, Tokyo 1990; Lockemann 2008: 222)? I think it is very strong imagery and I think some people might be offended. And I was wondering what you think about this combination.

Y.M.: Well, she [manga-girl] is the daughter of a wizard and she can make things the way she wants them. But even a famous anime character cannot change history. It is very simple. It is a very simple way, not so deep thinking. Very light animation and very heavy historical photograph. We have both for our history and culture and for our country. There are many of this type of photographs [kimono] in books and in Hiroshima, of course.

B.L.: If you don't want to say anything else about this book, I suggest that we switch to the other book.

Y.M.: People must start to think about our historical issues now, I think. We need this, I think.

B.L.: This is a German photographer, she was born in 1968 and she traveled to Japan in 1998 and 1999. So this is when these pictures were taken. And it was made into an exhibition in 2002 in the Sprengel Museum in Hanover.

Y.M.: Ah, Sprengel, wow.

I can't concentrate my impression on this book. It is not only in Tokyo, but many places.

B.L.: Yes, I think she traveled around the country a bit.

Y.M.: I said it already, I can't concentrate because there are many points of view, countryside, big city, daily life. That is my first impression.

B.L.: That topics are varied and are not concentrated?

Y.M.: Yes.

B.L.: But what do you think how Japan is being shown in this book?

Y.M.: If you compare the way people are shown in both of the books, here they are very natural, but the pictures are not very special or personal. The images are not strong, they don't leave a strong impression.

B.L.: Compared to other portraits? Or compared to other ways of taking portraits of people?

Y.M.: Not characteristic persons, I think. Of course, these are ordinary people, but I cannot understand why the photographer would like to take pictures of them. I cannot find out the stories between the photographer and the people in this type of photographs.

B.L.: Is it because they are not looking into the camera and never make eye-contact to the viewer?

Y.M.: I don't think that is the important thing, no. For example, we can imagine the age in which they are living, but it is a little bit difficult. They are very natural and very daily images. These photos have not such a strong impression. I think German artists have their own theory, that is why I would like to ask the photographer for her own theory. Maybe Graham's photographs are close, but these are even more close, go more in depth, I think. Not so superficial. It is a little bit difficult to talk about these photographs, I think.

B.L.: Well, it is not only for you, after having had some interviews I find, that it seems to be much easier to talk about Graham's work than about Neudörfl's. People can relate to Graham's images, they tell their opinion about it whether they like it or dislike it. But you can have an opinion on it. Neudörfl's is much more subtle, so a lot of people say well, I don't know, I can't really say, I kind of like it, but... So I think it is very difficult to talk about it.

Y.M.: I feel the generation difference. Graham is my generation, Neudörfl is a little bit younger. So this is the younger eye. I am interested in these photographs, but it is difficult. I must find out her point of view in deep, I think.

B.L.: She is doing this kind of conceptual documentary photography and she was concerned with aspects of security that she came upon in Japanese society. You know, when you get on an escalator that a soft voice will tell you to mind your step getting off. There are millions of aspects. It is, of course, also about earthquakes and being safe dealing with them in a proper way.

But then there are so many different aspects of security concerns that Europeans come across when traveling to Japan. [...] Everybody is really trying to make things safe here. So that is what she was thinking about while taking these pictures. For example visiting these resorts, like the pool and surf, where in reality the waves are not big enough for surfing. Also like skiing indoors.

Y.M.: What is this (vgl. Neudörfl 2002: Abb. 29; Lockemann 2008: 268)?

B.L.: This is taken in a disaster prevention center where you can learn how to act in case of an earthquake. You can see the lamp shaking...

Y.M.: And?

B.L.: I meant to tell you that maybe knowing that she is concerned with security aspects, maybe it makes it a little easier to understand her approach. As you said it is kind of difficult to get all the different pieces together in this work.

Y.M.: Was it a traveling exhibition as it is also in Japanese?

B.L.: No, the concept is that you can use it both ways, Western and Japanese. Both works have not been shown in Japan.

Y.M.: Last year I visited Hanover and also Stuttgart. Your government invited me to see some contemporary art in Germany. I went to Stuttgart for the first time.

B.L.: So, is it a view you would expect from someone European? Is it an outside view on Japan? How do you think Japan is depicted in this book?

Y.M.: For me she... Maybe for European people it is easier to understand than for Japanese people I think. I think, very typical European eye, but not stereotyped, she traveled here and there in Japan and maybe she could talk to many persons. I like this way of making pieces and I really like her concept. But I would like to know more of her work.

Graham is very easy for Japanese people, also for Europeans I think, but maybe this is a little bit difficult but we need this type of point of view to see foreign culture. We must learn a lot of her way of making works, I think. Not surface.

B.L.: Do you think it would be interesting for Japanese people to see these kind of images on display?

Y.M.: For Japanese people, Graham is very easy. But for my style, I would like to show Neudörfl's kind of photos and explain, I think. Especially in this countryside, because it is very difficult for people to know the concept and some other artistic ways, so they need explanation as well.

B.L.: I think in Germany it is basically the same that people have a hard time understanding this kind of photography. [...] On the opening of Neudörfl's

exhibition a journalist was asking: and where are the temples? People do expect to see certain things that they know of Japan and then they can relate to it and they can say, yes this is Japan. But when they don't see it, sometimes they cannot accept that this too is Japan.

Y.M.: Maybe a Japanese photographer cannot take pictures like her piece, I think. Very interesting, I think.

B.L.: Thank you, if there is nothing else you would like to say, we can stop here at this point.

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts.

Y.M.: Yes, I must continue to think about it, I think.